





ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 01419 2352

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL  
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

Gc  
929.2  
P317P0

2224101



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2019

<https://archive.org/details/oneswedepioneeri00pear>





ONE SWEDE PIONEER IN AMERICA

Troed Granville Pearson's

Autobiography

Edited and Published by Arvid Bjerking  
in Swedish

Translated into English by Mr. Pearson's  
granddaughter, Ruth Miller



# EN SKÅNSK BANBRYTARE I AMERIKA

TRUED GRANVILLE PEARSONS  
SJÄLVBIOGRAFI

Bearbetad och utgiven av  
ARVID BJERKING

A.-B. AXEL WELCHERS BOKHANDEL  
Oskarslamna.  
Lidingö 1911

MRS. C. N. SCHNURA  
P.O. BOX 11  
SANTA MONICA, CA  
90406



# EN SKÅNSK BANBRYTARE I AMERIKA

TRUED GRANVILLE PEARSONS  
SJÄLVBIOGRAFI

Bearbetad och utgiven av  
ARVID BJERKING

A photocopy of the actual title page  
from the Swedish publication provided  
by Swenson Research Center,  
Augustana College  
Rock Island, Illinois

(I also gave them a copy of this English  
translation.)

MRS. C. N. SCHNORA  
P.O. BOX 11  
SANTA MONICA, CA  
90406

Allen County Public Library  
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Trued Granville Pearson wrote his autobiography during the years 1893-1902 with, however, several long interruptions. He states that it was at the request of his children that he wrote these memoirs. I know that his descendants in America value highly this their ancestor's document and are proud of their Swedish ancestry. It is evident that this old pioneer had in mind the publishing of his memoirs just as his friend Col. Hans Mattson had done. In the sketch of his life and death in the 1907 *Prarieblomman* (Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill.) we read: "His memoirs and experiences, during pioneer times in Vasa, T. Granville Pearson evidently intended to publish in book form but, unfortunately, this he did not do."

That I now, after thirty years, have been privileged to bring his intention to a realization is rather unusual. Life is full of surprises, sometimes agreeable, sometimes disagreeable, oftenest the latter. When and up to that time, an unknown relative from a land the other side of the Atlantic meets one unprepared, brings to life almost forgotten childhood memories, and hands one a sketch of one's own homeland's history and culture of one hundred years ago, then one has a right to be truly surprised and agreeably so.

Something like this happened to me the summer of 1935 when I was at the Tyringe Sanatorium. One evening I met, eye to eye, an American lady who claimed relationship with me. Mrs. Mildred Freeburg from New York was spending a couple of months touring Sweden and, among other things, tried to trace distant relatives in the land from which he ancestors had emigrated. Although she belonged to the third generation of a family of emigrants, she spoke excellent Swedish and seemed to be intensely interested in all present day conditions in Sweden.

The childhood memories that I referred to above date from a day in August 1900 when a large invasion of Americans suddenly took place in my childhood home in Attarp. It consisted of six persons, two men and four women. They were led by Trued Granville Pearson, a slender, muscular, lively and still youthful appearing grayhaired man. He was born in Lareda near Hassleholm, and had left for America in 1851. Because nearly all his brothers and sisters had emigrated there were no near relatives left in his old home neighborhood, but on the other hand, many distant relations. He was, for instance, a cousin and childhood friend of my uncle Trued Anderson of Gulastorp. I still remember the hearty and inspiring reunion of the two "Trueds", the 73 year old farmer from Minnesota and the 75 year old Swedish farmer; it was their first meeting since youth. That they, however, had not entirely lost contact with each other is evidenced by two long, very interesting and well written letters from the emigrant to my uncle which I now possess.

The other man in the party was the old farmer's son, William Anthony Granville, Ph.D., who then was professor in Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Afterward, during 1910-1923, he served as President of Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

It was this visit of Americans to my old home of which I was reminded when I met Mrs. Freeburg. She is the granddaughter of Trued Granville Pearson and the Professor's niece. She handed me some old and yellowed American newspaper clippings, dated 35 years previously, in which there appeared in English a series of articles written by one of the ladies in the party which described their trip to Sweden. Quotations from these,



as well as a detailed description of all the members of the travel party, will be found in the closing chapter of this book.

Mrs. Freeburg took from her traveling bag something that, however, was still more remarkable. It was nothing more or less than her grandfather's autobiography, the very manuscript from which the material in this book has been chiefly drawn. The typewritten copy she gave me comprised 170 pages. During my stay at Tyringe I read it through with a great deal of interest. Later on I was given the responsibility of editing and publishing it. During the present year my revision of it has appeared as a series of articles in Kristianstads Lans Tidning. The kindness of editor Oscar Hammarlund, made it possible for me to have the series of articles printed in book form.

It has been my endeavor to edit the manuscript with the greatest fidelity. I have tried to avoid making any fundamental changes in the author's own presentation. It is his own unique style of narrating his experiences which makes the document so charming. My handling of the original has been chiefly in the wording. I have tried to change some of the Swedish-American idioms into modern Swedish. Some old sayings and provincial phrases, however, I have left untouched. Some changes in arrangement have been made for the sake of continuity and the material has been divided into chapters. Further, I have added clarifying notes; mostly of a biographical nature in a separate part of the book. The book closes with a couple of genealogical tables.

While I was doing this editing I contacted Trued Granville Pearson's son, Dr. W. A. Granville, now living in Chicago, Ill. He kindly gave me requested information, his parent's photographs, and data for the American part of the genealogical tables. He also agreed to write a short sketch about his father to insert in this book. I owe many thanks to Professor Granville for all this, and also for his many friendly and encouraging letters.

To him and Trued Grandville Pearson's other descendants in America this autobiography in its original form was dedicated by its author. The labor I have done on this book I wish to offer as a tribute to our common "Skanske" homeland and to all its sons and daughters, who, here or in foreign lands honor their ancestry. The history of the origin of this book, as here has been briefly explained, bear witness to the manner in which the bond of blood relationship can again unite, in spite of length of time and distant differences.

It so happens that this foreword, in the writing of which I finish my work, is signed by me in the same place where, two years before, I first read the original manuscript and became interested in this task.

Tyringe Sanatorium, September 1937.

Arvid Bjerking



## MEMORIES

First, I wish to express not only for myself, but also in behalf of all my father's descendants, deep gratitude for, and great satisfaction with, Mr. Arvid Bjerking's skillful and sympathetic editing of my father's autobiography. The interesting footnotes added by Mr. Bjerking shed much-needed light on many passages that would otherwise be obscure to the readers of this generation. We also extend our thanks and appreciation to the management of Kristianstads Lans Tidning for their courtesy in publishing the series of articles covering father's autobiography and for the printing of this attractive volume.

The story of a life can best be told by the person who lives it. Hence, an autobiography, if written frankly and with strict regard to the truth, will faithfully reveal the character of the narrator. This the autobiography of father does except that, because of his natural modesty, it does not bring out in strong enough relief the very high regard in which he was held by all those who knew him.

He was not consumed with the desire for wealth, power, or public honors. His whole thought, energy and ambition was to conscientiously fulfill the obligations of a dutiful son, a devoted husband, a loving father, a loyal citizen, a devout churchman, a good neighbor, and a general friend of man. In satisfying these, the greatest obligations of life, he was successful in the highest degree.

That father was blessed with more than average talents of mind and heart is evident from the fact that, although his education was limited, in the University of Lund to the requirements needed for teaching in an elementary school in those early times, and he did not know a word of English when he landed in America, he was before long elected to offices of public trust which required, not only a good command of the English language as spoken, but also the knowledge and skill necessary to draw up important legal documents. This his further education was chiefly advanced by the fact that he was an omniverous reader; he devoured every scrap of printed matter that came to hand. No matter how tired he was after the day's work, he always read in bed for a while before he went to sleep.

Father's autobiography does not reveal the fact that he was gifted with a scientific turn of mind. He was a close student of all natural phenomena and followed with great interest the scientific discussions of his day. He delivered a popular lecture on the fundamentals of Chemistry illustrating them with experiments. One of my most vivid recollections of him was the day, while we were harvesting wheat, when he told me that some day it would not be necessary to raise wheat, and other grains on farms, because the food needed by man would be produced synthetically by chemical processes. This, his prophetic vision is today beginning to be realized in startling fashion. From him I learned my first lessons in botany. As we drove together he explained to me the wonders of the heavens and inspired in my mind a great love for astronomy. I can still feel the thrills that I experienced when he explained to me the reasons for eclipses of the sun and moon.

When I try to express my love for and my gratitude to father, words fail to express what my heart strives to utter. I have him chiefly to thank for whatever I may be and for whatever little I have been able to accomplish.

Chicago, Ill.

W. A. Granville



## CHAPTER I

Vasa, Minnesota, March 22, 1893

As I now, at the request of my children, try to collect memories from my now soon closing life, I am sorry that I did not do it earlier because at the age of 66 much has been forgotten and many interesting personalities and events have become dim in my memory.

My own and my ancestors' home neighborhood for at least three generations before me was in Stoby Socken (township) in West Goinge Harad (Parish), Skane (Province) Sweden. My father, Per Olsson, was born in 1778 in Stoby and was the youngest of four brothers and two sisters. My grandfather, Paul Nilsson, and the latter's father as well, were also born in Stoby. In my youth I often heard old men tell stories about Ola Paulsson's four sons in Stoby. There were well known for their vigor and Viking-like characteristics. They were wonderful as friends and comrades, but fear-inspiring as enemies.

My father moved to Lareda, half a Swedish mile from Stoby, where he bought the Tulsen Estate, now the city of Hassleholm's Old Folks' Home. He married Bengta Persdaughter from Vedhygge, Ingaberga Socken. She died early, leaving two sons, Ola and Per. Later father married Karna Truedsdaughter of Lareda. She was my mother. She was born 1796 and was the daughter of Trued Anderson and Bengta Frennesdaughter. Grandfather Trued was from Ballingslov, Stoby Socken, but Grandmother Bengta was the daughter of Frenne Torsson of Truedstorp. He was a rich and influential member of the Swedish Parliament.

I was born July 1, 1827, in Lareda, my parents being Per Olsson and Karna Truedsdaughter. Here I grew up with my half brothers, Ola and Per; with my brothers, Anders, Nils, and Ola; and my sisters, Bengta, Boel and Agnes. I was the sixth child of my father.

Before I begin to tell the story of my life I will briefly tell something about each of my brothers and sisters. My half-brother Ola (born 1812) died at the age of 23 from internal injuries caused by lifting a too heavy weight. Per (born 1814) my other half-brother, was a lovable character and expert sharpshooter. He served as game warden and lumber inspector in a forest in Halland Province. He married Cecilia, the daughter of a minister. He died in Sperlingsholm, Halland, leaving two daughters and the widow, Cecilia; the latter afterwards married an organist. Anders (born 1820) completed the course in an agricultural institute after which he served as inspector on a large estate in Skane. A bachelor, he now (1893) lives with sister Boel in Hassleholm. Bengta (born 1821) married John Anderson. They arrived in Illinois, U.S.A., 1855. Bengta died 1892 leaving several children. Boel (born 1824) married A. Wennerholm, Hasselholm. They had several children, some of them coming to America. Nils (born 1829) emigrated to America about 1868, and settled in Minnesota. He served



first as a railway station agent and then became a farmer near Big Stone Lake. He was married and at death left several children. Agnes (born 1832) came to America in 1854 and married John Charleson, a farmer in Knox County, Illinois. They had several children. Ola (born 1836) the youngest of our family, came to America in 1852. He became a merchant in Kearny, Nebraska. He is now a widower with three daughters.

The two Goringe Parishes are located in north Skane and their north borders touch Smaland Province. The latter's poor and meager land extends over a large part of those two parishes. The land is sandy with large stretches of heather and moss interspersed with small lakes, islands and streams. Pine woods crowd down between Skane's oak, beech and birch forests. This makes a continually changing landscape. Here and there occur very good and attractive stretches of soil from which the yield rivals Skane's fertile plains.

Never can I forget that landscape's beautiful meadows showing a flora so manifold, so shining in daring colors, and a greensward so brightly shimmering, so tender, lovely and pleasing. Never have I anywhere else found such beauty. Here north and south meet to compete for nature's prizes.

I will never forget how, as a boy, one beautiful June morning, I took a path through one of these meadows. The greensward was strewn with an innumerable number of beautiful and fragrant flowers. At the top of every blade of grass a dew-drop mirrored the sunbeams. Bees hummed, birds sang and flitted hither and thither among the grazing cattle. For a few moments I contemplated this, nature's jubilee. Then I could no longer contain myself. Filled with ecstasy, I threw myself down in the grass among the flowers and bees and rolled around for a considerable distance. There seemed no other way for me to give vent to my feelings.

In a valley, surrounded by heather fields, lay the little hamlet Lareda. Here lived seven farmers. Our farm was the largest, even if not the best one. All the houses were situated approximately in a circle around a sort of market place in the middle of which lay a large flat rock called the neighborstone. On that the local head man stood when he blew a big horn to call the seven farmers together for a conference on some important matter.

Our farmstead in Lareda was, although somewhat larger, built exactly like the other six in the village. It consisted of four buildings, each about 100 feet long and 25 feet wide, placed in the form of a square with touching corners so that they enclosed a small court. A wide entrance on the west side and smaller ones at the ends of the farm house could be closed by gates so that no one could enter the little fort except by climbing over a roof. That was the old style of placing the buildings of the farmstead; it is now no longer followed. In the farm house were the following rooms: a big living room, outerroom, kitchen, a small room, room for buttery, Mother's room, Father's room, room for hired hands, summer room. The other buildings housed the cattle, horses, etc., and there were buildings in which to store grain and hay as well



as a woodshed and store-house for provisions.

We usually had three teams of horses in constant use, about 20 to 25 cattle, 30 to 40 sheep, 15 to 20 dozen chickens and geese. The farm consisted of 25 Swedish acres of old cultivated land, some newly cultivated land, and enough land in hay to feed the animals.

The little village was peculiarly old-fashioned in character. The folks in the seven farmsteads were more or less related. In the case of funerals, weddings, baptisms, and the like everybody was expected to attend,; Woe to those who in any way ignored old customs and traditions. For example, the great Christmas Cake must have a foundation of four layers of sweetened bread, then a layer of cheese, and topped with apples. The bottom layer had to weigh at least twenty pounds, the rest of the layers diminishing in size to the top of the pyramid. This "Christmas Pile" was erected Christmas Eve and remained untouched until the 31st day after Christmas. During Christmas no visitors were allowed to leave a home without eating and drinking Christmas ale. If they did it was said that they "carried away Christmas". The biggest "Christmas Pile" in the village was always saved until the spring work began. Then the people and the draft animals would get a taste of the cake before commencing work. On that apparently depended a good harvest later on.

If you went the rounds of the village any Saturday evening you would see in every house the whole family and the hired man and girls all sitting around a basket of potatoes, peeling them for the evening meal. The Sunday noon meal in every house always consisted of potato mush except during the Christmas season; then potatoes were never allowed on the table.

Home industries held full sway. No true farmer or his children dared to wear clothes other than those which, both as to material and workmanship, originated on his own farm and were made by his family. Thus there was raised and prepared enough flax for their own use and also some to sell. It was the same with wool. It was all prepared, cleaned, spun and woven. Clothing as well as shoes were made in the home. For everyday wear wooden shoes, slippers and boots with wooden soles were often worn.

Grain was threshed with flails, generally by two men who flailed alternately on the same sheaf. This threshing was done on the plank floor of a large barn along the sides of which the sheaves of grain were piled. Threshing continued throughout the winter. At four o'clock each morning this drumming on the barn floor commenced and continued all day if the weather was bad. If the weather was fair one worked in the wood lot. Saturday the grain was winnowed and carried to the granary.

When "breaking" the flax, hauling out manure, and making hay, the neighbors helped each other. That was a time for small "parties" hence all the workers looked forward to them.



Our farmstead was surrounded by quite a large garden with various kinds of apple, pear and cherry trees. Our garden contained an unusual number of these. Along the road the trees were so close together that for a stretch of about 10 rods one could climb from one to another. Near the village barnyards were enclosed by stout stone walls, but further away by hedges.

Every farmer made his own whiskey from potatoes and barley malt. Whiskey was usually sold when raw, but for our own use it was refined. A bottle of whiskey was always on the table. In spite of that, drunkenness was rarer than one might think even though it was available in every house in the village. In our home only father and one of my brothers tasted it. While I never saw my brother drunk, this household whiskey was a bad thing and it is well that it is no longer the custom.

Father was a stalwart, splendid man, slim and fully six feet tall. He had dark curly hair (but I remember him only as bald at the top and below surrounded with a fine wreath of hair.) He was brisk in his movements and had the reputation of not being afraid to take on anybody in a fight. I have myself seen him with a single blow of his fist fell a man who had too far tried his patience. An open, honest manner characterized him under all circumstances and he hated everything that was false or low. Hence he was very highly regarded by all. Even the nobility and other influential people always first tried to win over the fearless and influential Per Olsson when they tried to realize their plans in the Parish. Cheerful and friendly by temperament, he was always welcome in all ranks of society. As was the general custom in those days, he sometimes drank too much, but never except with visitors in his own home. He was never intoxicated away from home.

Father's greatest fault was a hot temper. When someone angered him, in the excitement he was sometimes unjust but, because of his noble character, he soon cooled down and did everything he could to help heal the hurt. In order to help a friend he once struck the sheriff and even broke a sword of an officer. That "play", as he called it, cost him a large sum and because of it the whole family suffered for many years. However, I remember that my older brothers used to brag about the affair.

Mother was a small woman of a mild and retiring nature. It was said that she had been a beautiful girl. She still was that to her children and was dearly loved by us all. She was God-fearing and sympathetic. Her kind nature greatly influenced for good both father and the children. She was considered a "religionist" in the meaning understood in olden days. It seemed to me that her religion was legalistic and hard; but she was utterly sincere and hardest on herself. She found great joy in comforting those who suffered from terrifying pangs of conscience.

A sincere old time religious consciousness dwelt deep down in the hearts of both father and mother. Although father rarely talked much about religion he never tolerated any jokes or ridiculing about the truth in God's word. And no one tried it



more than once in his presence, because in such a case he was not to be fooled with.

Some one of the children must every evening read the evening prayer in the Church hymnal, the Lord's Prayer, and the evening blessing. And at least every Saturday morning there was a short household worship. On Sundays and religious holidays we always attended Church services. We almost always walked the four miles to Church although there were three teams of horses in the barn.

Mother taught all of us children to read. Sitting on a stool near her humming spinning wheel we read aloud from the hymnal. Because of this I can still repeat from memory some of the first hymns although they were seldom used during church services. It did not satisfy mother that we merely read plainly; she insisted on our getting the full meaning of what we read. The vision of God's majesty, power, righteousness and love, as then implanted on my youthful mind, still remains undimmed in my memory.

My three older brothers were big, strong fellows and, as far as I can remember, they did all the farm labor without the help of hired men except for two peasant who lived in cottages on the edge of our farm pasture were obliged to work a certain number of days each year on our farm as agreed. My two older sisters helped Mother with the housework; hence our own folks practically did all the work required.

In this family of ten I grew up, but I was small and slender and also sickly until the age of fifteen. Hence I was allowed to do pretty much as I pleased because I certainly was not fit to become a farmer and any other vocation was not considered of any importance.

I remember well how father, when he introduced us children to visitors, used to say when my turn came: "This little pale fellow doesn't seem worth while fattening up. He was born 1827, the year of famine, hence he isn't fit for anything better than to stick his nose in a book."

However, that did not make me feel sore because I knew very well that if anyone was his favorite child it was I. I enjoyed his confidence in full measure.

I recall very vividly a memory from my early childhood. One autumn morning I and brother Nils were out filling our pockets with apples which had fallen into the road from the overhanging branches of a neighbor's tree. But just as we were ready to run with our loot, there stood father, dark and severe with a stick in his hand. He ordered us to go at once to the woman in the house, hand her the apples and ask her to forgive us for our attempt at stealing. This was hard, but we knew father and his stick as well. Oh, how ashamed I was as we silently stood there with the apples before the door. The woman understood very well how matters were. She gathered our apples in her apron, added some more to them, took our hands and led us home. There she presented us with the apples and read father a lecture about being too strict.

But I shall never forget the sorrow and worry that was shown on his face when he said: "Boys, boys, you may have much or little in your pockets, but that does not



matter. But it must be clean, clean. Don't forget that. Promise me now to never, never take anything that belongs to someone else." More than once I have since in memory seen that anxiety in my father's countenance.

I also well remember a beautiful summer day when I with other boys were playing. We were competing throwing stones. In my thoughtlessness I swore that I would throw a stone over a far oaktree. But I failed. The heavens darkened. I was frightened because I had uttered an oath. Crying, I rushed home to mother who was spinning. "Mother, Mother," I cried, "I have forsworn myself."

Patiently she set the spinning wheel aside. I knelt down beside her and confessed. Mother then read and I repeated it after her, a prayer for forgiveness. Then she put her hand on my head and gave me absolution. At once, everything was again well. The sky cleared. The birds sang. Full of joy I rushed back to my playmates fully convinced that I was a child of God. That was true religion!



## CHAPTER II

To read or listen to the telling of stories was my greatest delight. But the only books in my home were the Bible, hymnbook, Luther's collection of sermons, Luther's Catechism and some small books on Swedish history and geography. These books I read and reread until I could repeat them "on my five fingers".

I well remember the occasion when a visiting traveler, while his horses were being fed, brought forth a handsome book with pictures to read. I did not dare to ask him to let me see the book, but I edged up close to find out what it was about. My anxiety to see the book was so strong, that when he put it back in his pocket, I wept bitterly. On noting this he insisted on knowing why I was crying. Surprised at my great curiosity he laughed and made me a present of the book. If anyone ever felt fortunate, it was I. Even today I remember that kind gentleman with feelings of gratitude.

About the time that Mother had taught me to read and to write a little, a so-called "Lancaster School" was established in Stoby. This I attended until I had learnt all that the teacher knew, and even after that. That was rather unfortunate, because if I had had the advantage of a higher grade school I would surely have advanced further on the road to learning. For one thing, I did not realize the importance of continuing my schooling then and, for another, my parents did not think it was well for a farmer's son to become a student. One reason for this, their belief, was that among our acquaintances, many such students had "gone wrong". The result was that many precious years passed without much profit to me. The reading of anything and everything, and nothing in particular, did not bring worthwhile results.

However, my eagerness to learn created a special friendship between our minister and me. He was the famous Rev. Jonsson of Stoby. He was noted for his great strength. He could take one unruly fellow in each hand and knock their heads together so hard that you could hear their skulls crack. He was very strict with those who did not obey the church rules. Many a time I have seen strong men, as well as women, tremble like aspen leaves when, at a house examination, they had to stand up and answer his questions. When I, for the first time, was called up to recite, I "plumped" ahead and looked him so straight in the eye that he laughed at me. When I read from the book he gave me so that the walls echoed, he patted my head and praised me. From that moment I was his favorite.

About that time there was published in Sweden a series of pamphlets called "Useful Knowledge". They contained excellent information for the young.



Rev. Jonsson gave me two of them. Then I saved, scraped and begged from father in order to subscribe for more of the same kind through our pastor. He gave me at once another of the pamphlets. On my way home, I met a couple of beggar urchins who had some poems and stories for sale. As I had six pennies left, I bought from them the story of Lunkentus (a popular fairy story). As this was about the same size as the pamphlet, I inserted it inside the front cover. When I reached home, I laid them on the bench and went out again. Father was at home and was curious to know what sort of "useful knowledge" I had bought. He took the pamphlet and first read the title page which, sure enough, stated that it was "Useful Knowledge" and was issued by "The well-known and highly esteemed society so-and-so". Now, he thought, we'll see, and turning the cover over, he casually began to read about Lunkentus.

Never again was it worthwhile to talk to him about the Society for Spreading Useful Knowledge. After that, when I came home with one of the pamphlets, he used to say: "Ha, ha, there we have again some more of that useful knowledge." Until the last one arrived he always insisted that that honorable society only published stories about Lunkentus and "Blakullafarder" (another fairy tale).

As a chronicle of the time, I will relate some incidents in the career of Rev. Jonsson. As far as I was concerned, I have always felt very grateful to him but, quite naturally, he had many bitter enemies.

Once some of these enemies hired a thug to sing an obscene song outside his parsonage. Rev. Jonsson at once rushed out with his cane in his hand to beat the brute, but the latter took a whiskey bottle from the pocket of his coat and threw it so hard right in the middle of the Reverend's forehead that whiskey and bits of glass whirled around his face and eyes. That gave the thug time enough to run away, but those who had hired him to do the deed were so terrified about what had come of it they decided to have the thug jailed in order to protect him from utter destruction by the Reverend. The latter had hardly brushed the whiskey and glass bits from his face before he got wind of the fact that the fellow had been arrested. At once he hurriedly took a short cut to the main road, and, as the sheriff came along driving with his prisoner, the Reverend was standing behind a tree near the road. With one hand he easily jerked the thug out of the wagon, threw him on the road, beat him as long as he wished, and the sheriff did not dare to interfere. Then he threw the thug back into the wagon and went home. That cost Rev. Jonsson a pretty big sum because there was a strict law against manhandling a prisoner. However, because the Reverend was just as rich as he was strong, the final result of the affair was that the thug was given, not only his freedom but also enough money to live like a rich



man for a while year as a salve to his wounded feelings. However, never again did he sing any more songs near that parsonage.

One of my confirmation classmates, a big heavyset boy, told me one morning as we were walking to class that he had two fresh eggs in his pocket for lunch. Now, it so happened that on that very day he was called on to recite. He became so terror-stricken that he couldn't utter a word. The question was very easy to answer but not a sound could the pastor drag from him.

"Answer yes or no, you blockhead," roared the minister. But the boy remained as dumb as a post. Angry, the minister quickly rose, took him by the collar, raised his cane, and exclaimed, "Answer, you fool, or I'll give you a licking."

The boy remained as dumb as a fish. Then the minister threw him on the floor and struck him a hard blow. Bits of the eggs flew all around the room and plenty struck the minister's face. Never have I seen anyone so surprised. Wiping the egg blossoms out of his eyes he hastily cast his eyes over the class. When we, in spite of our fright, nevertheless laughed, he became wild, flung the boy back among us, and rushed out of the door. A little later he opened the door, stuck in his head and roared, "Come again next Tuesday."

So we were free from all bother that day. In the general jubilation the boy got six eggs from us to replace the two he had been so proud of that morning. For quite a while he was not called on to recite; however, he finally passed by the skin of his teeth.

On the whole our village had the reputation of being a very moral and orderly community. However, now and then things happened which were not so good. For example, on the day after Christmas it was the custom to first water the horses before sunrise in the running water of a nearby creek, and then in company ride to greet each farmstead singing St. Staffan's Song. They were then treated to ale, whiskey, apples and cakes. One year, though, the barn doors were nailed up and manure piled up against them, the saddles were strapped on bulls, and other outlandish things were done in every farmyard. That second day Christmas there was no "St. Staffan's Riding" and no church-going because the village was in an uproar.

The farmers were wild with anger - who had done it? All were guessing. The headman stood on the neighborstone and called the farmers together by blowing his horn. The discussion was heated and long as they threatened dire punishment on the miscreants. We young folks gaped at them and were much amused at their vain attempt to unravel the knot, especially as no one was really sure whether one of them had not had a hand in it.

One year it so happened that the woman who had been hired to dry the flax in the drying shed was so severely burned that she later died. Then it



was rumored that the drying shed was haunted. The following fall the flax was, as usual, to be stripped. That was always done by the women who continued their work evenings by lantern light. The night was dark but the weather fine, hence the roof boards had been taken off the shed. Now when the women were eating supper in the village some boys took these boards, placed them end to end, laid a train of powder on them to several heaps of powder near the shed. Soon all the women and girls returned from the village to resume stripping the flax. Before long, busy with hands and voices, they were talking about the woman who had been burned to death. Suddenly the lighted train of powder rushed toward the shed and then made fearful flashes right near them. That was absolutely the end of the stripping! Three of the women were gassed slightly. For some time after that there was a serious and subdued atmosphere among the old folks in the village. But the boys continued to have fun every day in the week.

Once our good village was overwhelmed with disgrace. These honorable descendants of the old farm-owning nobility considered it a great shame to be haled into court. They paid the salary of the sheriff, but they were too proud to have anything else to do with him and the other authorities. Were not they and their forefathers from time immemorial landowners who bowed down before no man? The sheriff and other law officers were all right for poor peasants who had only small patches of land near a great estate, but not for free landowners such as they.

It happened that a band of thieves from another parish succeeded in leading astray the wife of a peasant near our village; they induced her to act as a "fence" to dispose of their stolen goods. She went about it very cleverly. As she was well-thought-of in our village she succeeded in exchanging several articles of silver for eggs, butter, bread and other similar things in every household in the village. Even one of my sisters secured a small silver cup in this way. Some time after that the thieves were arrested, and the unheard-of thing happened. The sheriff came and an officer with him from another village and they searched every house in our village. In our and in a neighboring house the stolen articles were so insignificant in value that the sheriff refused to confiscate them or to bring the folks involved before the court. The other five householders were obliged to appear in court the very same day that the thieves were being tried. Of course, our five neighbors were acquitted on giving their explanations and returning the stolen articles in their possession. But the shame, and the taunts that they received from their neighbors were a terrible punishment for these smug and self-satisfied farmers.



One of the most stupid of them had an amusing experience in Kristianstad. There the high court for Skane and Blekinge held forth and there was stationed as a garrison four batteries of Vendes Artillery. Two or more of these artillery-men were always on guard outside the courthouse.

One day this man from Lareda traveled to Kristianstad on an errand concerning a matter before the court. There he met an old acquaintance outside, namely a member of the guard, a young fellow who two years previously had been employed by him to care for his sheep. The farmer, glad to meet an old friend, asked the guard where Judge was to be found.

"O ver there, pa; walk in and up a stairway to the left. But", and he whispered in the ear of the farmer, "when you get inside the door you will see a mat lying in the middle of the room. Be careful not to step on that mat because it covers a trap door and you will fall into the cellar. There they will slaughter you and send your flesh to Turkey for which they receive 10,000 riksdaler per hundred pounds." Such foolish tales were actually told and sometimes believed by ignorant and credulous people.

That scared the farmer so that he thought of returning home without seeing the Judge. Then the guard assured him that there was no danger provided he did not step on the mat. Reassured, the farmer went gingerly and sure enough, found the judge writing at his desk at the other end of the room and he saw a mat in the middle of the floor. He took off his hat and addressed the judge.

"What do you want?" asked the judge. The farmer answered but remained near the door. There was a chair beside the desk but none by the door. Then the judge said, "Come here, man, and sit down. It will take some time for me to attend to these papers."

"No, thank you, honorable judge, I will stand here by the door."

"Man, that I cannot allow; you must come here and sit down while waiting."

"No, no, my dear judge, please let me stand here."

"Nonsense, old man, come at once and sit down," roared the judge.

Then the fat farmer took a start, jumped over the mat with a thundering noise and took his stand by the side of the judge. Terrified, the judge jumped out of his chair and asked what the fellow meant by such a disturbance. Now, the farmer was also terrified. He jumped back over to the door. His patience being now exhausted the judge, with his cane in his hand, ordered him to come back at once and sit down like a sensible fellow or he would get a hiding. The farmer begged piteously for permission to stand by the door. But, no, that was out of the question.



"Come at once, or"= here the judge brandished his cane.

Again the farmer must go over the dreaded mat, but as he did not want to land in Turkey, he took another mighty jump. Now the blows from the cane began to rain down on his back so hard that he hurriedly jumped over the mat again, rushed through the door and down the stairs with the judge and his cane in pursuit.

It was the young guard who had the fun; he soon spread the story over Lareda. The farmer never heard the last of this from jokesters; they would ask him if he could still jump as well as he did in the court in Kristianstad.

The amusements of the young folks changed regularly with the seasons. During the spring it was bowling and ball-playing. Summertime we gathered around the birch trees growing in the beautiful meadows and amused ourselves in various ways. During winter we got together in our homes and played all of the old games.

An old man, who had the reputation of knowing some witchcraft, often used to visit our village to drive off rats and heal sick farm animals. He could also stop the flow of blood and do other similar unusual stunts of magic. Curious as I was, I secretly arranged with him, for a fee of five riksdaler, to teach me the most of his tricks. This was soon rumored about. As a result the rest of my playmates really regarded me with a sort of awe which naturally tickled my vanity. But my brothers and sisters only made fun of my sorcery.

One Christmas, my brother Per lost a valuable meerschaum pipe during a dance in our village. One of the young bloods had simply stolen it. The following spring while I and some other boys were pitching pennies near the house where the dance had been held my penny rolled far and I ran to recover it. Finally the penny stopped among a lot of timbers that were piled against a wall. I had a lot of trouble finding it, but while searching I discovered Per's pipe lying way back behind the timbers. It now at once occurred to me that here was a chance to convince those who were skeptical about my powers of magic, and that I really knew more than other folks.

So I took my penny and returned to my playmates. The same afternoon, the young folks were to come to our home to celebrate the birthday of one of my sisters. I secretly took the pipe and hid it in the house where it would be handy. When the room was filled with the playing young folks, I made a remark designed to bring the conversation around to a discussion about my ability to do magic. Impatiently, my brother Per ordered me to keep quiet with my foolishness. Then I asked him in an impudent tone of voice what he would give me if with my magic, I produced his lost pipe. After a moment's silence Per at last said,



"I will give you five riksdaler if, without leaving the house, you bring forth the pipe. But if you don't do it, I'll give you a licking."

"I'll take you up on that," I replied, "The five riksdaler are mine."

Then, before the whole gathering, I made a number of "hokus pokus" passes, mumbled some meaningless words, produced the pipe and threw it at them. It was quite a sight to see the different expressions in the faces. My mother became very disturbed, my sisters cried, and all looked at me "flabbergasted" if not horrified. Only my father laughed, and he said to Per, who was examining the pipe:

"Pay him at once the five riksdaler because he has earned them."

That was at the same time my greatest triumph and the end of my reputation as a sorcerer because, before Mother retired, I had to tell her how I had got hold of the pipe. However, there remained some who still believed that there was something more than tricks in my "sorcery". Per Ols Trued, they said, read such mysterious old books with big red letters here and there such as no Christian person could understand. And there were so many outlandish pictures printed among the red letters.

These suspicions increased still more when, the same spring, I laboriously climbed up a tree over fifty feet high which was bare of branches except at the very top. There a bird couple had built a big nest in which I found a small gold ornament that a young lady from Hassleholm had lost while taking a walk about half a Swedish mile from the tree. Although I gave a true account of where and how I had found it, nevertheless some of the villagers believed that the devil had helped me because it was not likely that birds cared anything about gold ornaments. Indeed, they had themselves seen me cast a spell on their guns, pick money out of their whiskers and do several other devilish stunts.



### CHAPTER III

Although father was not nearly as well read as I, he nevertheless was for his time and class unusually well-informed. Because he also had a keen mind and a clear insight into things he was well able to defend his position in any discussion of public questions. He often talked with me along such lines. It was about this time that the stark rationalism of the upper classes began to permeate the middle classes. It had originated in France and was the bitter fruit of the French Revolution. It became the fashion to follow Paris even in religious and political questions. Because I read anything and everything that came to hand, I also had gradually become tainted and was fascinated by the ringing and appealing rationalistic phrases. Everything depended on reason, right and common sense, until at last there was really nothing left for faith. Father understood very well that I had lost the faith of my childhood. He did not say much or condemn me, but, as if nothing had happened that was unusual, he explained to me that all these ideas were nothing but old threshed-out straw which was not worth the labor put into it by the frivolous people of our day. Those ideas were nothing but the froth on opinion's unruly waves which periodically collide and then follow one another on the vast sea of humanity. Under all this eternal truth rests, calm and undefeated. One shepherd and one flock - the answer to life's dark secret, is best seen on Golgotha, when His spirit, who is suffering there, allows a ray of light to enter our souls.

As a sign of the time, and to illustrate how father warned us against false ideas, I will relate an episode which happened when I was about eighteen years of age. A couple of boys, sons of a cottager near our village, had as journeymen travelled widely and finally returned from Paris where they had been employed for some time. Of course, they posed as genuine Frenchmen! Such fine clothes, and what fascinating persons! They knew everything and settled all questions with speechless admiration and wonder from us farmer boys and an undaunted cocksureness. With unmatched nonchalance they asserted that nowadays intelligent men no longer believed in the Bible. Religion served only to keep the lower classes under control. One had to have something that would frighten ignorant people.

Father listened to their delcamations but said nothing while a group of the village young folks with open mouths swallowed the new ideas.

Quite naturally, it was up to us to entertain these honored guests to the best of our ability. It was surprising how eagerly these fine gentlemen



deigned to partake of what we farmer boys had to offer; in fact, they became drunk as fools. One was lying by in the mud of the road. Father happened along and ordered us to carry him into the house and not neglect to properly care for our preacher of the new religion. That was all he said, but I was ashamed. Never since then when I have heard talk about rationalism have I failed to see in my mind's eye those drunken journeymen.

I had often heard quotations from Voltaire and Thomas Paine but at that time their books had not been translated into Swedish. I could get them only in French which I did not understand. Somehow I had got into my mind the idea that the really learned who could read these and other books unknown to me undoubtedly knew what was actually true if they were only willing to disclose it. Therefore I dug with all my might for those, as I believed, hidden treasures of wisdom, but always in vain. Still darker and more fearful appeared to me the answers to the questions: From where did I come, why, and what for?

These soul-searching enigmas were for me sometimes very trying. However, good health, youth and love of life asserted their rights. I decided, for the time being, to ignore these annoying questions, take the world as I found it, let my five good senses take in impressions of realities and leave to the future the possibility that the veil obscuring my soul's insight would be withdrawn. Of course, there were questions: If I have no future? If I die, what then? But no, I was born - let me see at least a little something of what life contains and what it has to offer a happy young man.

After I was confirmed, my health improved and I began to grow rapidly. Although I never caught up with my brothers in height or strength, at the age of twenty-one, when I was called for the usual military training, my height was five feet, eight inches. Ever since I have enjoyed good health. Hence, I began to do my share of the work about the home and became, if not very diligent, nevertheless a quite efficient farm worker according to the standards of that time and place. One year I hired out as a farmhand to a prominent agriculturist for exactly 100 kroner for the twelve months. When the year closed my wages had vanished, I hardly knew where. Such a state of affairs could not continue, that I clearly realized.

Then I undertook to operate a whiskey still for two Lareda farmers. I was to give them a certain amount of whiskey for each bushel of potatoes that they delivered. I also received a certain quantity of grain. Especially that first year, when I was careful and saving, did I do well. The first six



months this business netted me over three hundred riksdaler. The following year, saving less and wasting more, my profit was less than one hundred riksdaler.

About this time (1848) father died. I was the only one of the children, who, with Mother, stood at his bedside when he passed away. True, Ola, the youngest, was at home, but he was so small that Mother did not want to wake him up to see Father die. These two had been very close to each other. Many a time during the previous years, the little boy had been a great joy to Father. The little fellow cried bitterly next morning when he realized Father was dead.

Death came to him gently and peacefully. His last words were thanks and glory to God for everything. When I closed his eyes my wish was that I might, in the end, have such a peaceful death.

17 After Father's death his estate was divided. My half-brother Per first received half of everything, as was his right. Then Mother received half of all the remainder. The rest of us seven children, after all debts had been paid, divided among us the remaining one-fourth of the estate. There was little left for each of us. But that did not bother me in the least. I would soon be of age (21) and had received a pretty good training. I was free, and the world belonged to the free. Anyway, I believed that it owed me a living and I was ready to fight for a good one.

It was now rather late for me to seriously continue my studies. Besides, my share of the estate was too small for me to continue higher studies without running into debt. Partly to please my pastor, who had difficulty in securing teachers because he was in the habit of beating them up and partly because I wanted to sample what was offered at the University of Lund, I attended its teachers' training course under Rector Oviding for three months. I there earned a flattering certificate but at the same time I acquired an unshakeable determination against teaching as a life career. Hence, I returned home to Mother with my honored teaching certificate, fully determined to never use it. That I did not, however, then dare to tell either Mother or my pastor who in me he now thought he had a teacher whom he did not need to thrash now and then.

My oldest brother, Anders, had completed the course in an agricultural school and was now employed as a superintendent of a large country estate in southern Skane. That kind of career began to tempt me. I, therefore, applied for entrance as a working scholar in the agricultural institute in Degeberga Vastergotland, which was then considered the best in Sweden.



first time that spring, the cuckoo singing happily. I took that as a good omen and in a happy frame of mind I continued on the way to the tavern.

On the way I came across an old woman who wanted to know who I was, where I was going, etc. When I had told her, she exclaimed: "Aj, aj! I can myself feel how your Mother must suffer today!"

At the tavern I hired a horse and cart and late that night I arrived at the estate where my brother was inspector. To him I said, "Now I have everything clear and can either go to Degeberg for two years and then become a well-situated inspector like you, or go to America. Give me good advice."

"No, I will not advise you," he said, "because you must yourself decide on your future. But, if I was your age and as free as you, I would go to America. It is true that I am well-situated, not more than two or three of my 150 classmates at the insitute are better off. However, I want to tell you that the job of inspector is often a dog's life. One stands in the middle. I must be a petty tyrant toward those under me or else get into trouble with my superiors. I must play gentleman and tyrant at the same time. Now, let us go to bed. Tomorrow I will drive you to Halsingborg."

However, I had not yet arrived at a decision. Even next morning on our way to the city, I was undecided until we arrived at the beautiful \_\_losa. where on a hill we could look across O resund and see Helsingor on the Danish side. That was a fascinating spectacle. The whole sound seemed filled with ships, the white sails glittering so invitingly in the sunshine. The surface of the water was still and clear as a mirror. We stopped while I eagerly took in the wonderful scenery.

Finally I jumped out of the wagon and hollered: "I am going to America!"

My brother laughed and presented me with one hundred riksdaler to fatten my purse. So we parted in Halsingborg never to again meet on earth.



#### CHAPTER IV

In Halsingborg I soon met about fifty other people from Skane who were on their way to the new world. Among them were a few former acquaintances but also many young men and women who were strangers to me. We soon got to know each other. Among these new friends were Hans Mattson and H. Enstrom, young men who had studied and been trained in the artillery school in Kristianstad and, I believe, had there passed the gunnery examination. There were also several lively farmer sons and former hands from various sections. Two were from Stoby congregation, one from Ballingslov, and myself from Lareda. Some older farmers from Goringe, who had sold their farms, had set out with their families, trunks and many bundles, also belonged to the party.

Together we hired a small sail boat to take us "pick and pack" to Goteborg from where we knew that larger sailing ships often left for America. After a lot of fuss we were finally packed in and left Halsingborg's little harbor. I still remember a royal hussar who haughtily walked there and rattled his long saber chain on the stone pavement.

The course through Oresund and Kattegat was for us the worst part of the whole trip to America. The weather was fine in the Sound at first and we anticipated a regular pleasure trip. From the Danish side came a revenue boat with customs inspectors who visited our boat, because in those days the Danish government still had the right to charge toll from all who sailed Oresund. But the inspectors were fooled because the passengers and their personal property were duty free and the captain's cargo of paper was so completely covered with our baggage that they could not see a bit of it. So, that time the Danes got nothing for their trouble.

Toward evening it began to blow hard. The little boat tumbled and tossed about on the waves crazily. Waves washed over the deck so that we all had to go below on top of the baggage. Now there arose a terrible turmoil among all those "land crabs". For quite a while I tried to put on a bold, brave front and made fun of the seasick, but soon I became quiet and a little girl exclaimed, "See how pale Trued is!"

Angry at everything and everybody I rushed up on deck and sat by the steersman where the water constantly poured over us. Little I cared if everything went to the bottom, but the seasickness I must conquer. There I remained until the storm compelled the captain to lay to behind some islands near land. Then the steersman gave me a chew of tobacco and promised that after that I would never again get seasick. In that he was right.

The next day we soon reached Goteborg where our boat was anchored beside an entirely new, splendid little brig named Ambrosius. They were taking on



a cargo of iron and in about a couple of weeks it would sail for Boston in America. Soon we engaged passage and with our belongings moved into the brig. The cost to each one of us was 100 riksdaler, we to provide our own meals, bedding, etc. A board to sleep on was provided for each two persons, that was all. It was up to us to provide any comforts we could afford. However, we had nearly two weeks in which to get ready and in the meanwhile were allowed to live on the brig.

22 Goteborg is quite a large city located at the mouth of Gota River where it empties into the Western sea and is closely confined between high bare cliffs. Even then it was well built and kept in the best of order. We visited the most notable places, but these I have forgotten except the telegraph. It was built on a high hill outside of the city and was quite a high tower. The top story had large windows with a telescope through which one could see several similar towers some miles away. At the top were a large number of black, white and red placards which could be exposed or hidden at will. That was the telegraph of those days. While I was up there, there arrived a telegram from Lubeck over the Danish islands announcing the arrival of a Swedish ship.

Now we had to buy food for the voyage which at best would take six to eight weeks. That was puzzling because there was no arrangement for cooking. A kitchen was constructed on the brig for passengers, but no cooking utensils were provided. However, there were among the emigrants some older farmers who had sold their homes and who took with them large families on this trip to America. They had with them a lot of household goods and cooking utensils. About 25 of we young fellows from Skane organized and induced a capable daughter of one of these families to serve as our housekeeper during the trip. She furnished us with a list of the provisions she would need to feed us for two months. We joined in furnishing the money required and she did the purchasing. It turned out splendidly; we were well served with plenty of good food at small cost.

My friend from home was to be my bed fellow, but when we saw the board on which we were to sleep we found that it was entirely bare. The only bedding that we owned was one pillow and one blanket. We then bought a mattress filled with straw, on that we laid our pillow and blanket; but that looked so skimpy and poor that we, in desperation, hurried into town and did not return until it was dark in order to avoid jokes from our comrades about our pitiful bed. But when we sneaked back to go to bed we found it made up to a queen's taste. There was a feather bed, fine bed sheets and blankets. A family with a couple of fine girls had, without being asked, taken pity on us. So now everything was fine for us and we slept like little children with good consciences.



## CHAPTER V

As I now, March 4, 1896, again begin to write my memoirs, it seems lonely and strange. I miss my beloved wife who for more than forty-one years was so true and loving and stood by my side through both prosperity and adversity as no one else could possibly have done, it seems to me. She passed away last June 23 after a short illness which, however, had been preceded by several years of poor health, especially nerve weakness. Blessed is your memory, beloved Hannah, to your old husband and all our children! Soon will we meet again.

23 I will now begin where I last left off and tell about the voyage to America in 1851.

At last the cargo was all stowed away and we left both Goteborg and the homeland, but not without sadness. This, though, was soon vanquished by the courage of youth and bright anticipations. We were one hundred passengers from nearly all the Swedish provinces, most of them being young men and women, but also some families with older men and women. As soon as we had passed the many cliffs and islands which guard the entrance to Goteborg, and came out on the troubled waters of the North Sea, Ambrosius, our little brig, a newly built vessel, began to roll fearfully. From where I stood on the deck I heard the captain tell the pilot, "Aj, aj, we will roll this way all through the voyage. The cargo is stowed three inches too high."

That turned out to be the case. Often, even during the best weather, the brig rolled so that the water rushed over the gunwales, first on one side and then on the other, but onward we sailed nevertheless. Captain Backman was a skilled seaman who never neglected anything.

Naturally, many of those one hundred "land crabs" became very seasick. For a couple of days it was intolerable to remain below smelling the stench and listening to the lamentations. But I had been cured, and feeling fine, I stayed on deck as much as possible.

I had anticipated much pleasure from the prospect of passing through the English Channel, but in this I was disappointed. The wind was against us and Boston was our destination. Hence we passed north of Scotland. In the distance we got only a faint glimpse of the distant land and saw nothing English except a few fishing vessels.

So now we were out on the Atlantic sailing along week after week. It was often cold and the trip began to feel tedious because most of the time was passed below decks. I began to tell funny stories sitting in the kitchen where I was always given the place of honor. As many as could would crowd in but a large number stood outside of the door to listen. Among them were always numbers of the crew who were off duty; as often as they could they were interested



members of my audience. Now and then we would see vessels in the distance, but usually we saw only the endless, majestic and momentous ocean.

24 Easter Day we had a really threatening storm and all the passengers were ordered below in order not to be in the way. As the waves continually washed across the deck it was not so comfortable there. We lay on our bedboards but so violent was the pitching of the boat that several rolled off on the floor. A very fat old man had his bed near us. He raised himself on his elbows and knees, his big behind up high; he woefully prayed, "Oh, God, this is the end. Dear God, help! Now we are all finished."

The old man's position and terror were so very comical that I couldn't contain myself and burst out laughing loudly. That affected the other boys so that they all joined in laughing at the poor old fellow. Then he became very angry, especially at me, who was such a hardened sinner that I could laugh when death was so near. In order to avoid listening to him, I sneaked up on deck and crept down in the big life boat that was located in the middle of the deck near the mainmast. While the crew did see me they just laughed and allowed me to remain. There I lay the whole day contemplating the great spectacle.

We were running before the wind. The storm was so strong and steady that the whirling water whipped over everything and one could see only a short distance. All the sails were taken in except two small three-corner ones up in the bow. One of these was ripped apart like paper. After that we ran into a thick cold fog; in the distance we could barely glimpse large dark masses which the sailors said were icebergs. I noticed that both the captain and the steersman were unusually alert with their telescopes and gave their orders often and urgently.

Soon after that it cleared up. One day we first saw a column of smoke and then a steamship. That was the first steamship that I had ever seen. It looked majestic as it approached our little brig, which, in the meanwhile, had run up a lot of little signal flags. These were answered by the steamship.

Now the captain approached and asked who of us boys could throw the best. Then someone said that I was probably the best thrower they knew. I followed the captain aft where he handed me a bundle of papers wrapped with strong cord and ordered me to throw it on the deck of the approaching steamer when he gave the order. I shall never forget how fascinated I was as the steamer approached us calmly and stately; it was not effected by the waves rushing about us. The deck was crowded with elegant gentlemen, having still more elegant ladies leaning on their arms who curiously looked at our rolling brig with its crowd of emigrants. The steamship came near and stopped across our stern. Then the captain said I



should not throw the bundle because he could easily converse with the captain of the steamship.

Now we were approaching America. One fine day when we were all on deck the captain, who had lived in New York ten years, came and asked the heads of families what they intended to do in America. He advised them to go west and take up land, but warned those who had money by all means to make themselves and others believe, for at least two years, that they had no money. Otherwise they would certainly be cheated out of it. Finally, I asked him what we boys who had no money should do. Laughing, he replied that we were the lucky ones because we would be compelled to work, compelled to soon learn English, and compelled to learn the value of money before we had a chance to waste it. Often I have since been reminded of this wise advice of the honest captain when I again and again have noted how a little capital has been of more harm than benefit to the new emigrant.

One day our young lady housekeeper reported that she had only half as many eggs as the number in our party, and some of them were too old. Secretly I took all the eggs and shook them up thoroughly. Then I hustled all in our party up on deck and said, "To each one of you who can hit the door over there with an egg, I'll give a bottle of wine when we reach Boston, but each one who misses will have to pay for a bottle which we will all drink together as we dissolve our partnership."

That seemed so easy to do that all wanted a try at it, but four of them failed miserably. The first three eggs flew hither and thither, and the fourth was crushed against a sail. Then the steersman came and chased us away; hence I won only four bottles of wine. The rest of the eggs went overboard.

Now we were rapidly approaching the coast of America. The weather was fair and warm, but soon thunderclouds came up all around us; never before had I seen such lightning. The heavens were aflame with flashes of lightning but it did not thunder. We had a good following wind but the captain did not dare draw much nearer the coast without a local pilot because never before had he sailed to Boston. Evening was approaching and I could see that both the captain and the steersman were anxious. They were on the point of turning around when the lookout way up on the mainmast saw a pilot boat. It came, so it seemed to me, flying over the waves like a big bird and in a few minutes it came up on our port side. Then I learned first English words when the captain of it shouted, "Welcome!" Then I went below to bed and slept soundly until the sun was up high in the sky.

The sight that met my eyes when I again stepped on deck I shall never forget. The brig lay at anchor outside the harbor among the most beautiful islands,



on some of which were large handsome houses and very attractive gardens. All stood out in a rich summer beauty the like of which northmen had never seen. Vessels of all kinds crisscrossed here and there all packed full of ladies and gentlemen in holiday attire. Some of them carried bands of musicians that played so that it was a joy to listen. In the distance was the harbor, and the well-planned, and as we thought, the unusually large city.

The reason why we had to stay outside of the harbor was that we had a few cases of smallpox on board. A couple of doctors came out and examined everybody on the brig. Those who showed even the slightest symptom of the disease were at once taken to a detention hospital located on one of the islands near us.

26 Then we were allowed to proceed to the harbor. I was determined to be the first one of the emigrants to step on the long wished-for American soil. I stood by the railing ready to make a long jump when we came near enough to the harbor pier. Just as we slowly approached it seemed to me that I saw the image of my sorrowful mother standing there before me saying, "There lies your whole future's weal or woe. Shall you rush thoughtlessly to meet it?" At once I jumped back, went below deck where I was now all alone because all the others were on deck ready to step ashore. For quite awhile I remained below and battled as well as I knew how with my conscience and the feelings that overwhelmed me. When I at last went up, all the others had left the brig.

As soon as I stepped on land I met a girl with her apron full of cherries which she offered me. I still remember how wonderfully good they tasted. So my arrival in America was quite satisfactory; I took that as a favorable omen, indicating what I would here encounter. Those cherries and that girl were not easily forgotten.

Here everything was life and movement. Yelling and outcries in many languages. New and wonderful, however, it all appeared to us who did not care to worry about the future.

It was just six weeks since we had left Goteborg. All who intended to go west had arranged with the captain to buy tickets to Chicago through him. We were allowed to live on the brig until we were ready to travel. This took several days. I took advantage of this delay and took in Boston quite thoroughly. Standing on deck I could see the largest part of the city situated on land sloping down to the harbor. That slope stretched quite a distance to the right where at the highest point was a large beautiful building located in an extensive park. Where I stood I could see several large streets leading down to the harbor. I fixed all that firmly in my mind.

The following morning, all alone, I stepped on land, walked up one of the big streets and eventually reached the big park with the building on it.



That was the Boston Common and the State Capitol. That park appeared to me particularly attractive. On returning on another street I, after a long tramp, finally reached the harbor that afternoon.

27 The harbor pier I recognized at once, but where was our brig? It was not in sight anywhere. Now the whole harbor seemed strange to me. I was completely confused and knew not what to do. I who had planned my trip so well before I started so that there would be no chance for a slip. I stood completely at sea. I could not talk to anybody. Where should I go? Then as I stood there and pondered how foolishly I had acted, I heard talk and laughter that sounded Swedish. I leaned over the harbor railing to find out from where it came. Lo and behold, way down below me right enough lay Ambrosius with all my comrades on board. That morning, when I had left, Ambrosius was lying higher than the harbor wall, but now it had dropped way down below it. I had not thought about the large difference between the high and low tides on this coast.

The same day we landed in Boston another Swede whose name was on everybody's lips arrived there, namely, Jennie Lind. She had just won her first great triumph in New York and had now a victory parade into Boston. Outside of the city limits she was met by the renowned Boston militia which escorted her to the State capitol where the local police in double column guarded her as the honored guest of the city.

Three of the girls among our passengers got the idea to call on her. They had a lot of trouble passing the guards but at last reached her and were very pleasantly greeted by the singer. She admonished them to so conduct themselves in America that they would reflect honor on the fatherland. When she found out that they were poor working girls she presented them with quite a large sum of money when the interview was over. That interview benefited all of us in various ways; we became known as the countrymen of the much-worshipped singer



## CHAPTER VI

Then the day arrived when we were to start on our trip to the West. Each one of us paid the \$8.00 fare to Chicago. At that time the railroad was built only as far as Buffalo. There we were to take a lake steamboat to Chicago and from there a canal boat to Peoria, Ill.

As we now had all left Ambrosius and were in the railroad station, the number in our party was to be counted. That was not so easy as in and out all scurried about as in an ant hill. The room was packed full and we no longer understood what the Americans were doing. They opened the door to another room and motioned us to enter. Two men stood there to count us as we went through the door, but we rushed helter skelter into the other room. Thus we had to run back and forth several times, but to count us was more than the Yankees could do. At last I thought I understood what they wanted to do and I got a  
29 bright idea. I shouted that all should stand absolutely still while they counted us; that was successful. We were now allowed to take our places in the railway coaches that were waiting for us and our bundles.

That was the first railroad that anyone of us had ever seen because in 1851 there were no railroads in Sweden. The coaches were very plain; there were two long benches placed lengthwise on each side with a narrow passageway in the middle.

Now we set off to Albany, New York. I remember the country as we passed through as quite hilly with poor soil. The hills were covered with small pines, oaks and birch. Here and there were seen small, poor-looking farmsteads. If that was the highly praised and rich American fields, then, thought we from Skane, we had been cheated.

Our train often stopped on sidings to allow the passing of other trains. At one such place a small fellow joined us. He appeared to be a Jewish peddler. He sat down among us wholly unconcerned with his "pick and pack". He did not understand a single word we spoke, nor did we understand him.

We arrived in Albany in the evening, but the big Hudson River flowed between Albany and the station where we stopped. A large steam ferry was to carry us over to the city. There were many drivers with carts who wanted to transport our things from the station to the ferry. As the distance down there was only a few hundred feet, the old folks who had families and many trunks and bundles thought that we young men might help them carry the baggage and thus save each one fifty cents. Said and done. But just as our party with baggage reached the landing the ferry hauled in its gangplank and started to Albany without us.

There we stood in the twilight much distressed. Although we did not understand a word of what the drivers said, we understood very well that they



jeered at us. However, as we could not spend the night there on the river bank we crawled back up with our things to the station which was still open. Because several of us had just finished our military training and had both guns and ammunition, in one, two, three time we had an armed and well-trained patrol guard around the station. We had decided that the Yankees were not going to fool us again. As captain of the guard, I marched back and forth and occasionally cast longing glances over the river to the city.

Suddenly I saw two boats leave the city side and steer toward us. I then walked down to the river bank and saw the two boats, each one with four rowers and a steersman, approach me. One of them signaled to me confidently and when they landed he came to me and finally succeeded in making me understand that they wanted to carry us and our baggage across the river. In great haste our property was stowed away in one of the boats and all our folks in the other. When we arrived on the other side there were several wagons ready which carried our baggage directly to the railway station and conveyed us further on to a hotel where we were given a warm welcome. Soon a long table was prepared and an excellent meal set before us. Hungry we were and all ate with gusto.

It was now quite late and the hotel management wanted us to go to bed. They wanted to divide us into small groups and send us up one flight of stairs. Then a couple of fellows, who carried quite a lot of gold money became frightened and declared that it was quite evident what the hotel folks had in mind. They had kindly helped and fed us, but now they wanted to separate us in order to more easily rob us. Those words impressed several; there was weeping and wailing among the women, and for a moment it looked rather dark. Finally I induced three of the most courageous fellows to help me calm the people and they promised to do their best. Then I said out loud so that all could hear that we should not act foolishly but show the Americans that we were intelligent folks and were not afraid of spooks. Go calmly with these chambermaids who want to show you where to sleep. We four will go first.

I led the way and the other three followed me up stairs. We were taken to a room with three beds. A man was sleeping in one of them and snoring so we occupied the other two. As we lay there we could hear the others mumbling and sniffing downstairs, but finally they all followed our example and everything became quiet. Just as we after the day's many trials were dozing off, the man in the third bed in our room woke and began to holler "water" again and again as loud as he could. We jumped up in terror wondering what in the world was the matter. The man continued to yell, "Water, water". Finally one of my comrades took his boots and knocked on the floor with them as hard as he could. That brought results. Soon two nice girls came up to us with a bottle of water



and a glass. Now the man got his water, but when they had supplied him the girls came over to our beds and also offered us water all the time laughing and giggling and making no haste to leave. I was nearest them and thought that they were making fun of us. I asked my bedfellow if I should not take hold of the prettiest one. I then stretched out my arms and grabbed one of them. "Oh, hoj," now they hurried and scampered away, but for a long time we could hear how they chattered and giggled. Then we slept soundly the night through. The next morning we were served a splendid breakfast.

31 Bed, two meals and transportation across the river cost us fifty cents each. That was certainly cheap. However, it seemed that something was the matter. The hotel keeper, having noted what I did the evening before, came to me and talked a lot, but all I could understand was that something was amiss. Finally he took the Jew Peddlar who was still with us, myself, a couple of my comrades and a policeman, and off we went into the city. We were brought into an office, probably a police station. There sat a couple of stern looking gentlemen who first questioned the Jew and then us. The Jew chattered away at a great rate but we merely shook our heads. Suddenly one of them took the Jew by the collar, opened the door, and kicked him out so hard that he fell on his nose. My comrades and I then agreed that, if that was the way they were going to treat us, it would be a different tune. However, the gentlemen were very kind and, among other things, asked us our destination. I answered, "Knoxville." Then they shook their heads and said: "Slaves, slaves, black, black."

They pointed to a chair which was covered with black leather and said, "Slaves, O, black."

While I understood something about what they meant, to explain to them what they wanted to learn, that I did not know. Then I noticed a large map of the world hanging on the wall. Taking a ruler in my hand I ran to the map and pointed to Goteborg. Then they exclaimed, "Good, good."

Then I traced with the ruler our route over the Atlantic to Boston, and then the railroad from there to Albany, and said, "Here, here."

"Good, good," they again exclaimed.

From Albany I traced the railroad to Buffalo and through the Great Lakes to Chicago. Finally I pointed to Knoxville, Knox county, Illinois. Then they laughingly exclaimed, "Good, good, all right, all right."

They had thought that we intended to go south to Knoxville, Tennessee, and they wanted to warn us from going there because it was full of slaves, black niggers.

The little Jew peddlar had made the hotel man and the railroad officials believe that he was our interpreter and guide and therefore was entitled to free travel and board.



Our things were already in the railroad station and now we were shown the way there. There a train was waiting for us just like the one that had brought us from Boston. Now we found out that the little Jew Peddlar, after he had been licked out of the police station, had rushed to the train that was waiting for us. As they guessed he belonged to our party they did not watch him to see what he was doing. When we arrived he had vanished. A new overcoat and a double-barrelled gun belonging to one of our people had vanished with him.

Now we were off at a good pace to Buffalo. It was July 4th and everywhere we saw people picknicking in groves. The weather was warm and we all had the windows open. When some small boys threw in among us lighted bundles of firecrackers it caused a fearful confusion.

In Albany our party had been enlarged by a number of German immigrants. I sat nearest the aisle and directly opposit me sat a pretty young lady. But as we could not converse I dozed off and so did she. As we slept we leaned toward each other until we at last collided, with our noses. That caused among the others a lot of amusement and laughter at our expense and finally woke up both of us. There was a young man sitting by her side who after that watched me with suspicious looks.

We stayed in Buffalo a couple of days while the ugly little steamboat in which we were to travel took on cargo. Here I met a young Swede who claimed to have served as a notary in the head office of a province in Sweden. He had here succeeded in securing a job as street lantern lighter. I remember him saying, "In Sweden I could sit in the office of the head man in the province, but here I must be content to be allowed to light lanterns for these miserable Yankees."

Another event in my memory. Just as I and the lantern lighter were walking on the sidewalk in front of a three-story house, fire burst out of the windows of the first floor. A lot of people came down the stairs seemingly unconcerned. Some of them were smoking cigars. Neither they nor the people on the street showed the least concern about the burning house. However, soon a fire brigade arrived and began to put out the fire. No one seemed to pay the least attention to the fire. To us that seemed to indicate that these Yankees were a lot of cold blooded fellows.

From Buffalo we sailed in a slow, very heavily loaded screw steamboat over lakes Erie, Huron and Michigan to Chicago. That took a little over one week and turned out to be the most tiresome and uncomfortable part of our whole journey. We had to live below deck among a lot of machinery and find places to sleep as best we could. To cook was impossible and we often found it impossible to rest or sleep.



In the cargo there was some farm machinery. We wondered much how it was to be used. However, I had read in newspapers that there was a reaper used here for cutting grain, hence I became convinced that these machines were intended for that purpose. It took a long time, however, before I could make these Swedish farmers understand that these heavy machines (reapers) could do the work of scythes.

Our boat put in shore in many places, partly to load and partly to unload. Then we could step on land and look about and buy food. I remember one port on the Canadian side where our steamboat took in a big lot of wood for fuel. On going ashore we happened on a little house surrounded by a splendid garden in which were a lot of the finest kind of cherries. No one was at home except for a very old man. The cherries were too much of a temptation to us; we ate all we could of them in spite of the old man who jabbered and threatened us with his cane. When we collected together a small sum and gave it to him he became glad and so friendly that he showed us where the best cherries were to be found.

When we returned to the boat, we found that there were still many cords of wood unloaded. We then took hold and helped the crew carry the wood on board. When the loading was completed the captain came with a couple of big jugs of whiskey and motioned to us to come and drink. All tasted of this American nectar, some of them very freely, but to me it had a bad taste. Among the cabin passengers there was an old grey-haired man who took hold of me and with grimaces and actions tried to show how bad it was to drink whiskey. As I had already picked up a few English words I told him that I thought the same because American whiskey was only hogwash. He would not let me go until I had told the others not to drink any more because they would catch cholera and die before we finished the trip. That helped because they had great fear of cholera; in fact, a few cases had appeared among the German immigrants.

At last we reached Chicago all tired out and disgusted with all the water travel. The city was not then large, but it was ugly and situated so low along the river and lakeside that it smelled bad and we were eager to leave it. To travel further we had to take the canal boats drawn by horses. As these boats were not ready for us we had to remain in Chicago for two days. We ran across a Swedish shoemaker named Anderson who owned a house and lot and served meals. He was very anxious to sell his property for \$700.00, but we told him candidly that we would not have it for a gift. So little did we then realize the future of that city.



One afternoon I walked to the end of the largest street where I found a pasture on which a lot of cows were grazing. There were trees here and there. In the shadow under one I lay down and listened to the steady tinkling of the cow bells. Finally I went to sleep and, when I woke up, there were two girls looking at me. Each one carried a milk pail. I rose up and asked them if they did not think I was a handsome fellow. They laughed and talked a lot that I did not understand, but when I sprang up and tried to catch one of them they laughingly ran away and looked back to see if I was following them.

I don't now remember how long the canal trip from Chicago to Peoria took, but I do recall that we could step on and off the boat anytime and run along the tow path on which the horses which hauled the boat walked. We shot several wild geese which were in the reeds in the neighborhood.

When we reached Peoria our water travel was at an end. Now we had to go overland to Knox County, Illinois. It took some time before enough horses and wagons could be hired to carry our whole party with pick and pack to Knoxville. Then I and one of my comrades decided to hike ahead of the others, especially as each one of us had only a small knapsack. These we left for the wagons to carry and took to the road. On the way a farmer with horses and wagon overtook us. He had a jug of whiskey from which he offered us drinks and wanted to take us along. We well understood that he wanted to hire us, but first we wished to reach Knoxville, where we knew Lofgren from Brodakra and with whom I had corresponded. Hence we let the friendly fellow drive on while we continued on foot. It was very warm and we became thirsty, but fresh water was not available. However, the road ran over a hill covered with blackberry bushes having a bountiful set of ripe berries. Here we slaked our thirst with the luscious fruit.

Starting again on our way we presently saw a new house beside the road. We went in there, met a young married couple and asked to buy some milk. They looked us over curiously but did not understand what we said. I said, "Mjolk," but it was no go. At last I spoke real Skanske saying, "Melk, melk," but the man did not get it. Now it was proven that women are more quick-witted than men. The wife exclaimed, "Milk, milk." Opened a hatch in the floor, went down cellar and handed up a whole pan full of fresh milk. We drank as much as we wanted and offered them fifty cents for it but they refused to take any pay. We had a little bread and cheese in our pockets which we ate and continued on our way until late at night. We agreed that the much praised hospitality of America was evidently well-founded.

Finally we lay down under a tree, a little off the roadside and slept very well during the quiet and comfortably warm summer night. We arose with the sun and decided to ask for breakfast in the first house we saw. Before long there



appeared a pretty little house; from the chimney the smoke was rising. On entering we found an old couple and a servant girl. The man, who evidently was a preacher, welcomed us and asked us to sit down until breakfast was ready. we were then invited to eat the meal with them. We got coffee and plenty to eat in addition to a long prayer in which we strangers were not forgotten. On leaving we each offered him fifty cents, but he took only one fifty cent piece.

35

Then my comrade remarked, "Well, well, breakfast and prayer for twenty-five cents, cheap enough, but what has become of the American hospitality?"

Not long after noonday we reached Knoxville, tired and sleepy, met Mr. and Mrs. Lofgren and told them that the same evening they would meet many old acquaintances. We lay down in their garden and slept. That evening we were awakened by the noise of the three arriving wagons. So, all had now safely arrived at that so long and eagerly awaited goal. The trip had been comparatively short and lucky for us; we were all in good health and with great hopes and anticipation had reached our journey's end.



We rested a couple of days with Mr. and Mrs. Lofgren who royally entertained me and my comrade O. P. who came from the same parish. Soon the news spread in the little town that a lot of Swedes had arrived and as it was hay-ing time, farmers came and hired as many as wanted to work. O. P. and I at once hired out to a farmer. Because we were genuine Skaninger and could handle scythes and do anything else required in the hay field at that time, we had steady work at one dollar a day until late fall. O.P., who had some money, quit then and returned to town, but I hired out to a new settler for three months at \$18.00 per month. The man's name was Mr. Hestor and he had recently come from England. He was a cultured, decent man, but a poor farmer. He subscribed for several newspapers; these I could study evenings as much as I liked. With my fondness for reading, that was of no little value to me but, oh, the language - how I read and pondered! Despairing I often threw the newspaper away, only to soon pick it up again and try to get some meaning out of that barbarous language. In one of the newspapers there was always a couple of columns of short items, jokes, anecdotes, etc., and it was these small paragraphs which finally gave me the key to the English language. One evening I grasped the meaning of a humorous bit and burst out laughing. At once Hestor and his two boys came over to see what had caused my merriment. When I showed them what I had read they seemed just as happy as I that I should have so quickly learnt to read their language. As reward, the man gave me a big glass of beer. Usually he was not at all generous with his beer.

In one way or another I won the favor of Mrs. Hestor. While she was obliged to bake hot bread and biscuits every meal for her husband and the boys I always wanted what had been left over from the day before. I have never been able to take a liking to warm bread.

I have always recalled with gratitude the many kindnesses I enjoyed from that family. As long as I lived in Illinois I was always a welcome guest in that home.

A lot of the young men who had been my traveling companions had found employment in a brickyard situated near where I worked. One day one of them came and asked me to take his place for one day while he went on an errand to Knoxville. As we were not very busy just then, Mr. Hestor consented to my going to the brickyard. It was owned by an old Scotchman who himself moulded the bricks; I was to help him. He had with him a little Swedish boy who he had adopted and who could talk both Swedish and English. As the end of the day approached, the old man told the boy to ask me what my name was.



"Trued," I replied; but that name the Scotchman could not pronounce. He then sent the boy to me again. The boy said,

"The boss says that you are much too good looking a young man to have such an ugly name. After this your name shall be Granville."

This was heard by all the other workers and they laughed at me. I answered that the old man might call me any name he liked but my honorable Swedish name I wanted to keep. However, ever since then the name Granville has been attached to me in spite of the fact that I did not want it. No doubt all who knew me in Illinois, and still remember me, do so under the name of Granville.

38

When my three months with Mr. Hestor ended, there was also an end to work on the farms. I therefore went to town and lived with a Swede whose wife was a Norwegian. I then sawed wood, dug coal and did other odd jobs. In that way I earned enough to pay for my board and lodging. As something unique I remember that at the town's slaughter house there were big piles of hog's heads, feet and ribs from which anyone who wanted could take whatever they wished free of cost. The rest of the hog meat was hauled to Peoria to be sold.

A young laborer from Huskvarna, as I remember it, had brought along from the factory where he had worked a large box of guns for hunting, both single and double barrellled. They were packed in knocked down, with the barrels, locks and stocks in separate lots. He wanted me and another Swede to assemble and test these hunting guns. We picked up and assembled a half dozen of them, partly single and partly double-barrellled. Then we hired a team of horses and an ordinary farm wagon and set out for the prairie to hunt prairie chickens. All we needed to do was to drive straight on over the prairie. As the hens raised their heads we could shoot as many of them as we wanted. We started our hunt only a couple of miles from town.

No matter how far we drove on we could see nothing but sky and grass. I realized from the nature of the grass that here was the richest soil that I had ever seen except that possibly the fields of southern Skane might compare with it in fertility. But alas, how small did not Skane's little plots of farmland seem to me compared to this apparently limitless plain! Although we drove on almost the entire day, we could see no end to it. The impression I there received I have never been able to forget. It seemed to me that here was room for all needy farmers; here was a soil that would richly reward all the labor put into it. This same great prairie is now completely covered with farms tilled by prosperous agriculturists.



While we had bagged enough prairie chickens we had at the same time "busted" three barrels of the six guns. However, two of them seemed to be excellent hunting pieces. Later on we found out that the box had contained only guns which had been rejected at the factory on account of this or that defect. By combining the strongest barrels with the best locks and stocks we assembled some serviceable guns which could be sold at a good price. In fact, there were enough good guns so that the owner, no doubt, received enough to cover what they had cost him.

39 A couple of merchants in Galesburg had bought a half section (320 acres) ten miles from town on the above described grass plain which was almost as level as a surface of water. On it they had built a small house. They had a sort of plow that was drawn by six pair of oxen. That plow cut a big turf which was turned over to one side very evenly all along the half section lines so that it formed a sort of line fence of turf. Inside of this line a hedge was planted. I and another young man from Skane contracted to dig a little ditch of a certain width and depth along the outer side of this turf fence. That made a ditch three miles in length. We were paid a certain amount per rod.

That work took a large part of the summer. We bought bread and cheese.-- On that we subsisted almost all the time. That was cheap food. We persisted and worked hard so that our earnings were quite good. However, the work became monotonous towards the last as we labored week after week on the great plain three miles from the nearest town where we bought our bread. We were therefore glad when our work was approved and we could go to Galesburg and get paid off.

However, I got tired of seeking work here and there among the farmers and therefore accepted a job under Mr. Armstrong in Knoxville. He had, according to those time, quite a large machine shop where a lot of ploughs wagons and small steam engines were manufactured. There I got \$20 per month and room and board in Armstrong's own home. He was an Englishman as was also his shop superintendent. I stood in so well with both of them that, although I had never before worked in a machine shop, I received just as much in wages as the others. That did not sit well with some of the older workmen who for years had stood the heat and burden of the day.

It so happened, just at the time I had been hired, that the man who ran the lathes was discharged for drunkenness. I was asked if I would take his place. I thought I could and wanted to try it. If I had understood then all that would be required of me I would not have dared to undertake the job. All kinds of turning of both wood and iron was required. But luck favors the bold. Well and good, I was ordered to take charge of the

57



lathe room the next morning. I was there early to take charge and carefully examined all the tools. In an adjoining room there were many finished pieces of both wood and iron. I picked out several of them and laid them on a shelf before me as patterns to work from. I then commenced slowly but failed utterly in my first attempts. I threw the spoiled pieces under the boiler and continued to turn the best I could. Later in the day Mr. Armstrong came in to see how I was getting along, but I was working so intensely that I did not notice him until he took down from the shelf a couple of my patterns. Thinking that I had made them he exclaimed after examining them carefully, "Very well, it goes all right."

Then I simply said, "Let me stay here a couple of days until I get used to the lathe and tools. If I don't succeed I'll quit without taking any pay."

"All right, go on," he said.

Later I learned that an older workman, who wanted the job, had told Armstrong that I knew nothing about turning. Nothing resulted from that interference, however. I soon learnt the art of turning so well that there was no reason to complain of my work. Later on, I was transferred to the main machine shop where I got along still better.

40 Several times Mr. Armstrong offered me very favorable terms if I would stay on with him. That, though, was not for me, a freeborn farmer from Skane, to be satisfied to work for others when unnumbered acres of the richest soil that God had ever created was waiting to be occupied.

Armstrong was in many respects an excellent boss; at least we Swedes thought so. He required that all in his employ should abstain from strong drink, card playing and other vices. Among us was a bragging superstitious Irishman who had the habit of carrying to the boss everything that happened among us Swedes. One evening while I was alone in the shop working at something, several of the Swedish boys had crept in a garret room to play cards, confident that I would not tattle about it. The Irishman, who had seen my light, came sneaking in to see what was going on. Now it so happened that some time previous to that a farmer who was acting as night watchman in the shop had become suddenly sick and died in the very room where the boys were playing cards. While the Irishman was talking about this and that, and I was speculating about how to get rid of him before the boys came down, we heard a loud thumping in the room above.

"What was that?" asked the frightened Irishman.

I whispered, "Jim" (The name of the man who had died up there) and out went my light. The Irishman was off like a rocket.

Now I went up to the boys; they were terrified. They were certain that



they would be fired if the boss found out that they had played cards in the shop. They begged me to go to Mr. Armstrong at once and try to save their jobs for them.

Instead I crept into the room where I knew he slept. There I saw him on his knees diligently crossing himself and fingering his string of prayer beads. I then assured the boys that the danger was over and went home.

The next morning the Irishman came to me and whispered, "Granville, that was awful."

I replied, "Keep quiet about it. Not a word to a soul, if you know what is good for you."

41 At one time three young Yankees came to work in the shop. There assigned to beds in the same room where the Swedish boys slept. At the end of the first week, they came to the boss and asked for a separate room. They did not want to mix with Swedes. Armstrong answered curtly, "Go and get your money! I wouldn't trade one Swede for the three of you."



I arrived in America some time after the notorious Roth had shot and killed Erik Janson of Bishop Hill. He was now to be tried for murder in the courthouse in Knoxville. This affair was so much talked about, and the defendant had so many sympathizers among people everywhere, that everybody wanted to attend the trial. We and several of our neighbors therefore went there to observe the proceedings. Roth was a Swede; he had fought in the Mexican War and almost everybody was for him. A famous lawyer was employed to defend him. Of course, I could not understand all that he said in Roth's defense, for a whole day. When he employed technical terms and Latin words I could follow him much better than when he used a more colloquial language. Roth was still in the prime of life and looked well sitting on a chair near his lawyer. I remember how the latter laid his hand on Roth's head and, turning to the jury said, "God forbid that this noble brow should be dishonored in this free country."

However, the murder of Erik Janson was so ruthless and undisputed that Roth was sentenced to two years in prison. It was generally thought that if Roth had followed the advice of his lawyer and confessed, he would have gone scot free. That he would not do, however, but declared that he was satisfied with the verdict.

Already at that time there were some Swedes in Knoxville, Galesburg, Victoria, Andover and smaller places in Knox County. Many of these had been "Erick Jansoners" but for one reason or another had left Bishop Hill where the Jansoners had a flourishing colony of between 700 and 800 followers. These Ex-Jansoners constituted very excellent material for Methodist propaganda. The brothers Hedstrom were the chief Methodist proselyters. The older one of them greeted the Swedish emigrants in New York as they landed and worked on them. To those who were bound for the West he recommended his brother who lived in Victoria. The latter was only a blacksmith by trade but was gifted with considerable ability as a speaker. He had small congregations in all the above named towns.

In Andover and Galesburg there were small congregations of Swedish Lutherans, but Rev. Esbjorn, the only Lutheran minister in America at that time, had gone East. It was said that he had done this to meet Jenny Lind and ask for her help in Lutheran missionary work among the Swedes in the West. Hence the first year we did not meet him but attended Methodist meetings. Hedstrom himself could not come but he had a number of more or less able coworkers who often conducted several meetings a week.



They always insisted to begin with that they were Lutherans and, indeed, were really genuine Lutherans. The State Church of Sweden was not genuinely Lutheran, they declared, because it had parted from Luther himself. They condemned that Church with many hard judgments.

Once Hedstrom had a meeting in a home where a child was to be baptized. Those who lived in that home belonged to our party. They had literature in the house in which here and there were small commentaries explaining the text. It so happened that the Text Hedstrom had chosen to preach on was followed by such an explanation. I saw, after he had read the text, that he also whispered the explanation to himself. Thereupon, he said aloud, "Yes, I see that here is an explanation of this chapter, but it is not correct, and it is a pity that the state church of Sweden should want to deceive poor souls so fearfully."

44 After the sermon was over, I made it a point to help him hitch his horse to the buggy. I then said, "It was a big mistake you made when you called yourself a genuine Lutheran and then publicly declared that Luther's own explanation of the Chapter was false. There are many more than I who know full well that the explanations in the Old Swedish Bible were written by Luther himself and not by the State Church of Sweden."

This criticism clearly annoyed him. He answered little or nothing but afterwards it seemed to me that he was more careful in his assertions. We remained good friends, although I did not become a Methodist. However, I will admit that I was sorely tempted when at a large meeting I was seated on a long row of young boys and girls. Hedstrom had just closed one of his best and most pleading talks when he urged all who wanted to be saved to rise. Now when the whole row in front of me stood up it almost seemed to me that someone wanted to force me to rise. I saw the loving looks and heard the tender words, which even the young girls lavished on me. They urged me to become one of God's children by simply standing up. I sat still as did also those behind me. From that day on I was looked on as a particularly hardened sinner; it was even considered necessary to hold a special prayer meeting for my welfare.

The services, though, were free. They were careful not to ask pay of those of our people when serving them at baptisms, funerals, weddings, etc. So, indeed, they were Christians, they did not labor for pay in worldly goods. It was only the preachers of the state church, whose purses had holes in the bottom, who did that, from whom the Lord save us!

One of these preachers, a carpenter by trade, often conducted our meetings. He, like the rest, did not have much of an education. He would



read a Chapter in the Bible and then explain it to us. At first that turned out to be pretty poor but it did not take long before he began to recite a drilled lesson - and then it went off smoothly - the trouble being, however, that the lesson was always the same, almost word for word. His comments on the text always ended with, "Oh, may we now", and then began the old lesson over again. As soon as the "Oh, may we now" was heard I began to half aloud repeat the lesson word for word, just before the speaker murmured them. That caused much merriment among those who sat near me. All the while I looked at the speaker very attentively and seriously. He saw that my lips moved but took it for granted that it was pure devotion on my part. He therefore had great hopes of my conversion until one of the girls who had heard me tattled about it to him. Accordingly, I was considered as a lost soul and a great sinner, one who even went so far as to make fun of the preacher.

45 Some also insisted that even Esbjorn was not a real minister because he did not wear a gown. It was said that in Chicago there was one who had on a minister's gown and collar, although we did not see him. He was Pastor Unonius.

Along about springtime, Rev. Esbjorn came back. He had secured a sum from Jenny Lind and Lutherans in the East toward the building of a church. When he came to Galesburg I called on him and requested a membership in his congregation there. They had a little frame church which was not plastered, lacked furnishings, and of which the Congregationalists were half owners. The Sunday I was taken in there was a large congregation present. We sat on boards laid across sawbucks and there was a chair and small table for the minister.

Esbjorn was at least in one respect more strict in his requirements than is now the case in the Augustana Synod; I had to promise to not indulge in strong drink. Esbjorn made a favorable impression on me. He was a splendid preacher at divine services, but did not find it as easy as Hedstrom to shake a sermon out of his sleeves. Esbjorn was in many respects a learned man with much knowledge and interest in chemistry and mathematics. He was therefore a good friend of John Erickson who already at that time had attained much favorable attention in New York.

The chief reason why I so soon joined a Lutheran congregation was that I wanted to please my mother in Sweden. I knew that she never forgot me in her prayers. Otherwise, I did not feel any urgent need of it. However, the temptation to join a non-Lutheran church was thereby totally overcome. Ever since I have always felt at home in the Lutheran communion, have interested myself in its welfare and enjoyed its success in everything.



Now began an inflow of many emigrants, among them being my mother's brother, John Truedsson and his family. He had a small fortune but many children. For their sake and because of my letters home he had sold his <sup>170</sup> torp and now came accompanied by Rev. Hasselquist, a well-known evangelist from my home neighborhood. With them came a little congregation from that section. They were splendid folks and some of them had means.

46 The Yankees now became more interested in Swedes. They were quite different from the Irish, Italians, and others. The Swedes were intelligent and splendid workers, good Protestants, and they had some money. Now there was also life and action among Lutherans. Hasselquist became pastor in Galesburg and organized congregations in Knoxville and other nearby towns. His services were always attended by large audiences. Even Methodists and Baptists could not refrain from coming to listen to the popular preacher.

Now Hedstrom in Victoria called upon his also famous brother in New York to come and help him set a limit to Hasselquist's forward march. Hasselquist and his wife had rented a house near where I lived. One day I saw him sawing wood for his stove. He was at that time a well-knit and strong man, quite expert in gymnastics. Though to me it seemed that the sawing was not as successful as it should have been. Moreover, never before had I seen a Swedish minister saw wood. Therefore I went over, asked him to stop and told him that I would soon saw up that load of wood. He thanked me but said that it was no disgrace for anybody to do manual labor.

"That may be so," I said, "but we are not yet Yankees enough to wish to see our pastor saw wood."

When I had finished sawing the wood, Hedstrom and his brother came riding by in a buggy. Both of them went in to make Hasselquist a visit. As I suspected that something serious or quite amusing was about to happen in there, I slipped through the kitchen near to the door of the room where they were. The door was slightly ajar so that I could both see and hear without being myself seen.

The first thing I heard was spoken by the elder Hedstrom. He fervently begged that they, who still were brothers in the faith, served the same Master in the same field where all workers were needed, etc., might be kindled by Jesus' love to, as real brothers, work together without friction. Hasselquist answered that nothing would please him more, but asked if brother Hedstrom thought that such cordial cooperation was possible in case they did not agree on what was pure doctrine according to the Bible on which faith must be grounded.



They were now sitting, Hedstrom in one corner of the room and Hasselquist in the opposite corner. The disputation soon took on the form of a battle between two opponents. The words "brother" and "brethren" were no longer heard. I do not remember all that was said during this quarrel but I do remember that it became so hot that both the elder Hedstrom and Hasselquist rose from their chairs and, while all the time exchanging words, they took short steps toward each other until they faced each other in the middle of the room like two fighting cocks. Finally Hedstrom whirled on his heels, said goodbye and went his way. I then said to myself, "Aha, the beginning is never like the ending."

47 Supported by the American Methodists, who were numerous and rich, the Hedstrom brothers, during several days and evenings, held large revival meetings in their big church; were attended by Swedes from every locality. One evening while I was there Hasselquist was also present. He was politely ushered to a seat of honor where he sat quiet and still like the others. As the meeting was closing Hedstrom in a friendly manner asked him to pray. He replied, "No, tonight I am here only as a listener."

At once, Hedstrom turned around on his heels, sprang to the middle of the floor, threw himself on his knees, there, and in a mighty voice poured out a feverish prayer in which he did not forget us poor Lutherans who were in great danger of taking the shell instead of the kernel.

But that was of little avail. Several of the Swedish Methodists became tired of the oft repeated sensational outbursts in the meetings and seemed in our calm and quiet services to receive a permanent satisfaction of the soul without a lot of artificial stimulation. It was clear that Hasselquist was the right man at the right time and place.

The Baptists also fished energetically among the emigrants, not without some success. Hence we were well served, religiously, from all sides. A certain Mr. Palmquist lived in the neighborhood of Galesburg for some time. A cultured and pleasant man, he fished in a considerate manner. Palmquist preached in our church a couple of Sundays when Hasselquist was traveling about the country. On his return Hasselquist openly thanked and praised him because he had not touched the least on the differences between their communions. Instead, Palmquist arranged the meetings in the house of a Baptist family for the purpose of holding discussions on these differences. Those who did not want to go were free to stay away.



## CHAPTER IX

While I lived in Galesburg it happened that one Saturday evening when I came home from work that Peter, the son of my host, said, "Granville, you can never guess our luck. A family from Skane has rented the little house over there. They have a daughter so beautiful that I have never seen the like."

"We shall see about that," I answered. "Don't you know that everybody from Skane is handsome, but especially the girls?"

"No," he said, "but this one is charming."

Sunday morning, before I had finished breakfast, Peter rushed in and shouted, "Come out, Granville, and you will see that pretty girl."

When I came out I saw a fifteen or sixteen year old girl walking from the little house to the well where we, a lot of boys, stood and stared at the poor girl. She carried a pail in which to bring the water back. Peter was right. She was really unusually pretty, but the innocent calmness with which she approached us made her still more delightful in my eyes.

Now, while all the boys were staring at her without saying anything, I stepped forth and said, "Let me help you."

Whereupon I took the pail, filled it from the well, and asked permission to carry it to the house for her. That she refused. There we stood and saw the slender girl laboriously carrying the heavy pail until she vanished in the house. Then the other boys chattered about how I, like Jacob, thought that I had found my Rachel. I answered,

"It is too bad that the girl is so young and small, otherwise she would certainly be mine. I will watch and see if she, perhaps, grows up fast."

That was the first time that I saw your Mother who now, after forty-four years, has left me. The meeting at the well that morning is just as clear and vivid in my mind now as then. Her step-father, Sven Nilsson, and his son, Nils, had been in our company on the sea voyage, hence we were already acquainted. I had written a letter for him addressed to his wife in Sweden who now, with Hannah and a little half-brother Jons, had come to join their father and brother Nils.

Although I was working for Armstrong in Knoxville, I did not forget the pretty girl from Skane who was in service in Galesburg and lived with her parents. Now and then I visited her. She grew fast, became a stately lady, and was gifted with an unusually clear understanding of things. She always attracted a great deal of attention from both Swedes and Americans wherever she went.

My boss, Mr. Armstrong, owned an unusually large and handsome horse which, because of mishandling, had become so unreliable that it could hardly be used for any purpose. When it took the notion it would stand stock still



when either a saddle or a harness was put on him. Armstrong thought that he was fooling me when he promised that I could use the horse all I wanted if I would take care of him. I accepted his offer and it did not take long before I could ride the horse anywhere. It was therefore natural that on Sunday evenings he often carried me to Galesburg. It was also natural that when Hannah was home with her Mother, the horse had to stand there for quite a while before I started back to Knoxville.

One day it so happened that there was to be a big political meeting in Galesburg which Armstrong was anxious to attend. He asked me if I thought he could ride there on the horse.

"Yes, indeed," I said. "Get ready and I'll saddle the horse."

When Armstrong arrived in Galesburg the main street was crowded with people. The stately horse trotted along calmly until they reached the little house where my girl's parents lived. Then he stopped short. Amid the large and laughing crowd the rider had to dismount and continue on foot. However, everything went fine when he started for home again. But I and my comrades heard how he swore at the pretty Swedish girl and at me, the master prankster, who had lured him into the trap.

One fine day, a couple of comrades and I, Hannah and two of my girl acquaintances drove to Bishop Hill to look over the famous community there. It had had between 700 and 800 members. There were quite large buildings, a hospital and stables, but there also remained long rows of small huts which at one time had been used as homes. These were now used as spinning and weaving rooms in which a large number of both old and young women were working. Janson raised a lot of flax and from sheep they got wool. All wore very simple homespun and homemade clothes. I remember the dark looks with which the older women viewed our girls. They called them harlots because they seemed like American women.

I had a brief discussion with three of the leaders who, after Erick Janson's death, had been elected as managers. First I made some statements about their plan to have everything in common. All of them owned everything but no one owned anything. I did not believe that it would be successful in the long run. They answered with quotations from the Bible. They claimed that it was the only right plan for real Christian communities. Then we talked about religion and doctrine. I remember that I finally stated that they were Methodists because they quoted the same Bible texts and used the same line of reasoning as the Methodists when the latter were proselyting to get members among Lutherans. They promptly answered:

"Indeed, have they already learned that much from us?"



However, we were invited to an oldtime solid and plain dinner. We were seated at long tables each of which accommodated over 100 people

It was quite evident that the young people, both girls and boys, were sorely tempted to leave that heaven and forthwith go with us out into the world, but the watchers on guard were too vigilant.

At a Fourth of July Celebration, a lot of Swedes, both girls and boys, got together. In some way we had aroused jealousy in the minds of the American and Irish young people there. In order to have revenge on us, one of them a tall gangling scoundrel, said so loud that all could hear,

"I don't understand why the Swedes should be so backward in everything.

That angered me so that on the spur of the moment I rushed up on the platform and hollered,

"I am a Swede, and if anyone wants to prove what was said just come on.. I will show you that a Swede is ahead of you in everything and in any way."

51 Everything was quiet for a moment, evidently in surprise because of my boldness, but when the gangling Yankee pulled off his coat, a large stout Englishman, known as a champion boxer, sprang forward and, laying his hand on my shoulder, said:

"You are a brave little comrade. I will help you," Then, turning to the Yankee, he said,

"If you want to fight, I will take you on first, but if you want to challenge this young Swede in some other way, he can easily take care of himself."

Not a word more came from them. Hence the friendly Englishman helped me to thoroughly squelch the Yankees and Irishmen present.

The close of that Fourth of July I remember as one of the luckiest moments of my life. Before Hannah and I parted that evening she had promised to forever be mine.

Now, for a long time I attended to my work in the factory as a man in a dream, a sweet and beautiful dream.

Because Hannah's mother died not long after this, and her stepfather began to look around for another wife, Hannah, in spite of her youth, finally gave her consent to my urgent entreaties that we should marry.

Up to that time I had paid Armstrong \$10.00 per month for board and room. I now asked him for a \$10.00 raise in my monthly wages.

"All right," he replied.

That was in March, 1854. I rented and furnished a house. Then I took a week off and went to Galesburg where Dr. Hasselquist married us in the presence of Hannah's stepfather, her two half brothers, and an old Swedish couple who lived in the same house. They constituted the entire



wedding party, but that did not detract from our bliss. Hannah was not quite seventeen and I was ten years older.

But soon, altogether too soon, Saturday came and next Monday I must be off to work again. I hired a splendid rig to convey us to our future home in Knoxville. As we, that beautiful morning in March, drove on I was particularly satisfied and proud anticipating how the next day in Church I would present my young and fascinating wife to my acquaintances who, I was sure, would be there to look her over.

For quite a long while I sat silent, my mind occupied with these fantasies. Hannah was also silent. When I finally turned toward her, I was surprised to see two large bright tears were rolling down her cheeks while on her face there was a very serious and grievous expression. This rapid and violent change from pure enchantment to the grimmest hopelessness I have never experienced. Until then I had always been certain Hannah loved me above everybody and everything and felt happy with me, but clearly I saw that she was feeling very miserable. But why? For a while I could only look at her, but then I exclaimed, "Hannah, why do you cry? Are you unhappy?"

"Yes," she said, "but not for the reason you think. You are not the reason. I had promised Hasselquist not to marry you but instead to give myself to the Lord. I realized that this was my duty, but I couldn't do it."

Hard as I tried I could not obliterate these clouds from her mind. When we got home, there a number of neighbors, fine women, had tidied up the house and welcomed my young wife.

Perhaps here I should say something about both my and Hannah's convictions. When only fourteen years of age she had been converted through hearing the famous Rev. Ahnfelt who came to Vinslov where he was welcomed by Dr. Bergman, the wellknown revivalist. A swarm of persons attended the church in Vinslov where Ahnfelt sang and preached; it caused a great stir among the folks in that community. The next year Hannah was confirmed by Bergman just before she started for America. She was always very much attached to Bergman; they corresponded, exchanged photographs, etc., as long as they were both living.

Yes, your Mother was a true Christian. She not only believed, but also lived as a child of God. One must highly esteem such faith. It was not possible to joke or blaspheme Christian truths in her presence. To many she sometimes seemed to be too strict, but all had to admit that was most strict with herself, and that love for all filled her heart.

As for myself, I had, as I grew to manhood, and as I have already indicated, lost my childhood faith, or at least the assurance I then had.



Avaricious for knowledge, as I have always been, I always and everywhere searched for realities. But from the people whom I considered above me in knowledge and experience, and with whom I was proud to associate, I only seemed to doubt everybody and everything. Religion was useful only for the purpose of controlling the ignorant masses. If there was a God, which was doubtful, he had given us reason as a guide. Everything else was more or less deceitful. While seeking after the truth, I found that there were English and French books written by very learned men which it was said, would pierce the veil for those who were fortunate enough to get hold of them. Since these languages and these books were not available to me in Sweden, I was very glad, on my arrival in America, to find all of them printed in English. Hans Mattson, who in religious matters had about the same attitude as I, had come across Voltaire's and Thomas Paine's works. These he lent me. I still remember how deceived I felt when I had read through those thick volumes. I found that the net result from them was nothing more or less than the old clever wit and false reasoning which I had previously heard many times in taverns and during drinking parties where I mingled with my famed friends from the upper classes. However, it happened that Hans Mattson was suddenly converted. Now he became conscience-stricken because he had sent me those books, and when he next met Hasselquist he confessed to what he had done. He asked Hasselquist to call on me and get the books back. That Hasselquist did and thus learned what kind of a Church member he had. That was probably the reason why he had warned Hannah against me.

Some time after that I met Hasselquist at my uncle's house where we were on a summer evening sitting outside when the whole heavens seems to be covered by flashes of lightning. I remember that Hasselquist and I were there alone. He said,

"You have probably learned that it is not possible for the earth and everything on it to be devoured by fire as is stated in the scriptures. But then, don't you think that it could easily happen?"

We discussed matters for a few moments. He did not say much, but in reply to my objections he simply answered,

"If what the Bible states is not true, then it does not matter what happens." Then he went to bed.

That answer, which seemed strange from such a man as Hasselquist, was, however, a help to me. The world, philosophers, learned men, and free thinkers in general, all seemed to be as much at sea as I. Nowhere did I find the answer to life's riddle. Nevertheless it seemed absurd that



God should exist without witness and let us fumble in the dark without the benefit of any light on the way. I had already observed that true Christians were happier while living, and that they died in peace. Was it really true that this faith about which they talked saved them both for this life and for eternity? Perhaps Jesus of Nazareth was truly God's son. His unique personality, life, work, death, and resurrection, was now clearer and more glorious than ever before. Shall I believe or deny? If I only knew that the New Testament was true! I should love to believe it, but....., but..... not all my reason was as yet blotted out.

54 The first year of our marriage passed and hardly any young couple could have been happier than we were. The summer of 1854, Agnes, my youngest sister, arrived from Sweden. During her sea voyage, unfortunately, several of her travelling companions had died of Cholera. She lived with us, and not long after her arrival, became sick with cholera. Soon thereafter my wife also became sick. Moreover, this sickness attacked so many families in the area that all were very much frightened. Since not a soul but the doctor dared enter our home I had to nurse the two patients to the best of my ability. However, we were not forgotten. Every morning when I opened the door, there I found several kinds of food and plenty for us all. I remember how dejected I became when I looked out of the window which faced a graveyard because from morning to night during a whole week's time I could not look out without seeing men digging graves or lowering coffins.

Luckily the cholera was of a mild type. The doctor ordered me to apply mustard plasters on the stomachs of my patients when they were seized with cramps. One night when both of them were weakest I covered my sister's stomach with mustard plasters. Perhaps I had made them too hot although she seemed at once to become quiet and went to sleep. Then as I went to Hannah, I found her so weak that I could not get a word out of her. In great anguish I thought that she was going to leave me. Not knowing what I was to do, I knelt down by her bed and prayed a long time, but still with much doubt in my heart. Finally, Hannah whispered, "Oh, I am glad, so glad!"

That I did not understand but thought that she was delirious. Now my sister began to scream and complain that she had awful stomach pains. In my terror, I put a double dose of powders in a glass of strong whiskey and compelled her to swallow it all. That was enough to make a healthy person drunk, but it seemed to do her some good. However, as the pains would not stop, she sprang out of the bed and ran around the floor. Thereupon she lost her mustard plasters which we had forgotten in the excitement. The



pains stopped at once, and she was much better, but she lost her skin where the mustard plaster had touched her.

When the doctor came he declared that I had done wonders. When I told him what I had done he laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. While this was happening Hannah's sickness had also taken a turn for the better so that all danger to life for both of them was now over. When I told Hannah about her delirium, she said, "No, I was so glad, so glad, when I saw and heard you pray. And I am still happy about it. It did me more good than all the medicine you gave me."

55 While we lived in Knoxville, we belonged to the Lutheran congregation there. This one, those in Galesburg and some smaller places, were served by Hasselquist with the aid of Hakan Olson, Cederstam and some young men who were studying under Hasselquist. These young men later on became pastors and while their education was not much to brag about, they were faithful and some fruit from their labors resulted. I had some part in the building of the Church in Galesburg and was active throughout the building of the church in Knoxville. At that time these congregations belonged to the Lutheran Synod of Illinois and I was a delegate to its meeting in Galesburg which I think was in 1853. Present were Hasselquist, Erland Carlson, Hakanson and two American pastors. For some reason, which I do not remember Rev. Esbjorn was not present.

One day when I had an errand in the courthouse, the notary asked me if I did not want to join the Odd Fellows. That would be an honor as well as helpful to me. Not everybody could receive such a flattering invitation, etc., he said. Thoughtlessly I half promised to join the order. And the next day Armstrong also came and asked me to join. I asked him what kind of a club it was, but he only laughed and said, "You will see. We meet Sunday evening. I'll see to that you are chosen a member and you pay \$5.00, the cost of entering our honorable fraternity. If you wait it will cost you \$10.00 because it has already been decided to soon double the entrance fee."

Then I began to seriously think about the matter, and when I told Hannah about it she became very uneasy and begged that I should not have anything to do with it. I did not want to take back my promise to join, nor did I want to oppose Hannah. I was therefore puzzled as to how I could with honor withdraw my promise.

Just about that time my left hand was so badly hurt in an accident that I was compelled to stay away from work for a whole month. While the damage done finally turned out to be of little or no hindrance to me, at first my hand looked bad. The rumor spread that I would lose it. The result was that I was not admitted to the lodge because then I would have been entitled to



a disability benefit of \$8.00 per week so long as I was not able to work. When I, after a time, had been at work, I was again asked to join. I replied that I considered it of more value to remain a free person than to be a member of their "humbug society".

56 It was while the injury to my hand kept me from work that Senator Stephen Douglas traveled all over Illinois holding political meetings at which he talked about the Missouri Compromise. He also came to Knoxville. There I saw and heard the "Little Giant", as he was called. He was already the most famous slavery advocate, but later he became even more renowned when he fought the historic duel of words with Lincoln. With speech he was a giant but in stature a pigmy. It seemed to me that never before had anyone approached him in the political field. However, he finally lost out, which was right, because slavery was still is one of the problems which must be solved with compromise.

At that time the temper of the people was particularly aroused because a runaway slave had been caught on the line between Illinois and Wisconsin by a couple of slave hunters. On their way home down south the slave hunters demanded of local officials that county jails should be at their service. That was granted because it was required by the abominable fugitive slave law. If they had not had the jail and the help of the sheriff they would certainly have lost their prisoner during the night. We thought it a terrible aggravation the next morning to see these slave hunters armed with revolvers and, with the slave between them, march with laughing scorn through the gathering of people protected by the sheriff and several of his assistants.



## CHAPTER X

April 4, 1855, Beata, our first daughter was born. This ray of sunshine in our home only lasted until the 11th of the next August when she left us. She was interred in the town cemetery of Knoxville where many other Swedes were buried.

57 Throughout we always looked forward to the owning of a home somewhere in the West. It was below my dignity, I who had been born a free farmer son in Skane, to spend my life working either for Yankees or others. Just at that time much was being reported about Minnesota. In every respect it was a promising land in which enterprising sons of the North might fight their way ahead as independent agriculturists. The loss of our first child and the resulting emptiness in our home also contributed to our decision to move to Minnesota in the fall of 1855.

But before Beata died, my mother accompanied by sister Bengta and her husband from Krakeberga arrived from Sweden. Ola, the youngest member of our family had, as previously related, already arrived in the company of my uncle. Ola, who was a brisk, energetic lad with blonde hair, made his way in America very successfully.

Just before we were ready to move to Minnesota, sister Agnes married John Charleson from Ostergotland. Consequently we left behind us in Knox County, Illinois, my mother, two sisters with their husbands and brother Ola. On Hannah's side we left her step-father, who was now remarried, and her two half brothers, Nils and Jons. Both of the latter volunteered for service in the Civil War and from which Jons did not return. It was believed that he was drown when a cavalry troop of Sherman's Army, to which he belonged, were crossing a river. Nils is still alive (1896) and lives with his family in Omaha, Neb.

One day at noontime we said our farewells and journeyed to Burlington. That evening a large and splendid Mississippi River steamboat from St. Louis arrived. On this we were allowed to choose the best cabin left because we were the first to apply for cabin accommodations. That cost \$40.00 for us both, including meals. At the table we sat next to the Captain.

It was in every respect an enjoyable trip. It took ten days to reach St. Paul. The boat touched every little town or landing then existing along the banks of the Mississippi River. The Captain notified us when we could step ashore and look around and rang the bell when we had to return aboard.

Soon both the upper and lower decks were so crowded with passengers that they slept on tables, chairs, and on the floor. Even then, many of them found no place to sleep. Although we had two beds in our cabin, no attempt



was made to crowd anybody in on us. Hannah, however, took pity on a couple of Swedish girls; she let them sleep in one of our beds.

The water was high. As there was no railroad west of Burlington, there was a very lively river traffic using all kinds of boats. These were going to or from Minnesota and were so heavily loaded that it seemed a miracle that they did not sink.

After ten days we arrived at St. Paul. The place did not look very much of anything. There were a lot of houses on the hills and on the lowlands, and on one of the business streets leading to the river there was much life and movement. Here was truly a great demand for laborers. Like most others I had not made the trip there in order to work for others.

We got rooms with Anna B. who conducted a hotel. She was an acquaintance of ours from Illinois. She had as manager the later on well-known Mr. Schonbeck, a lively fellow. He later joined the First Minnesota Regiment as a volunteer and, after the war, became a senator in the Minnesota legislature. We had the same lodgings the second time I was a member of that legislature.

I left Hannah with Anna B. while, in the company of a friend, I set out on foot from St. Paul to a place that was located about fifteen miles inland from Carver along the Minnesota River. There was a fine lake surrounded by heavy timber around which a number of Swedes had settled and built small log houses. We were already acquainted with some of the families from Knoxville. Because of their letters to me I was inclined to also settle down near the lake.

It was a long distance from St. Paul to Carver. We set out one fine autumn day, came to Fort Snelling where I, for the first time, saw United States regular soldiers, and passed through Minneapolis, which then consisted of only a few new houses located on a sandy prairie. On the other side of the Mississippi was St. Anthony which then was quite a little city. Fortunately, there was a sort of road that was used by new settlers which was said to lead to Carver. Glad and lightfooted we marched were in the best of spirits. Sometimes it was hours before we again saw a dwelling. The land was still mostly prairie dotted with small and attractive groves and clumps of bushes located along clear running creeks which we sometimes had difficulty crossing dry shod.

During the afternoon we did not see a single house. It began to get dark and we wondered if we should have to sleep under the open sky. Soon though we saw in the distance a quite large and entirely new log house. We went there but met only a tall swarthy woman. She hardly understood what



we said, but nevertheless she willingly allowed us to stay there overnight and at once set about preparing supper for us.

After the woman had lit a sort of lamp and we had been sitting around for a while two tall, slender black-haired fellows came in. They wore leather suits and each carried a big, long gun. Astonished, both of them stared at us with their black and seemingly threatening eyes. We at once found out that they were the woman's sons. Soon we were engaged in a lively conversation because they could speak English better than their mother. They said that they were from Canada and of French descent, but I suspected that they had some Indian blood in their veins. Because now and then the woman seemed to look askance at us with speculative eyes I was half afraid that **dark plans were** afoot, especially as my comrade had openly disclosed that we had money enough to buy land or build a house. He also showed them his gold watch and tried to make a trade with them.

When the meal was ready we got a simple but ample supper of venison. Then we climbed up into the attic to sleep. The floor consisted of loose, hewn planks; between these they had left large chinks. My comrade went to sleep at once like a child while I kept listening to the whisperings downstairs. But I could not hear what they said. Now the woman came creeping up the ladder into the attic with a large knife in her hand. She glanced over toward us to see if we were sleeping. I pretended to sleep just as soundly as my comrade. Then I heard one of the sons downstairs say, "Yes, kill them both."

Now the woman walked toward us with her knife in one hand and a lamp in the other, but instead of heading for us, she went to a hanging side of bacon and began to slice off pieces. At the same time I heard quite an uproar in the little chicken coop near the door. Now I understood the meaning of the words, "Kill them both." Two roosters must die to provide us with breakfast and they tasted mighty good next morning.

We did not reach Carver until late the following afternoon. It had begun to rain and the wind was cold. It was not possible for us to reach the Swedish settlement by the lake that day because it meant a fifteen mile walk through dense woodland without the trace of a road to follow. We stopped at the town's only hotel where, again, we were to encounter an adventure.

The whole town belonged to a company that had bought the land, laid out the town, and built the hotel as well as a store and some houses. The officers of the company were anxious to sell town lots to all who came there.

We were assigned to a small room on the second floor. The walls were



lathed but not as yet plastered. The night was cold and rainy. Late in the night there arrived a couple of loads of immigrants. Among them were several women and a number of children who were wet and suffering from cold. They were assigned to a large room next to us where they at once started a hot fire in the stove in order to warm and dry themselves. We could see them through the lathing.

Toward morning we were awakened by loud cries. We then saw that the red hot stove had set fire to the lathing between the two rooms. The fire had already gotten such a big start that it was impossible to put it out.

"Hurry and dress yourself," I cried to my comrade.

That was done in a hurry so we had ample time to walk down the long, narrow stairway. But in my haste I had forgotten my hat. When I turned around to run up after it the stairway was already crowded with women and children; so my hat was consumed by the flames. I went in the lower rooms to see what could be saved. There I found the hotel manager busy collecting money and silver. He paid no attention to the furniture. I carried out some of the best chairs, but when he did not want to help me I went my way and, like him, did not consider that the property of the company concerned me. He had been hired by the company to run the hotel and did not seem the least interested in saving more than what he could put in his pockets.

We continued at a good pace on our way to the lake where we found our acquaintances from Knoxville. They had built fine log houses during the summer, and had hunted and fished so successfully that they had all kinds of food except bread, which was very dear. They had felled trees and burnt underbrush but as yet they had no clearing ready for planting. However, they had scratched in potatoes and several kinds of vegetables among the hazelbrush and secured quite a good yield.

Here we claimed as homesteads the last two quarter sections bordering on the lake in addition to which I claimed a beautiful little island. In a couple of days we had built what were called "claim shacks" so that no one could take our land from us.

Thereupon I trudged back to St. Paul to bring my wife so that we could get settled before winter set in. I already realized that winter up there was quite a different matter from winter in Illinois.



## CHAPTER XI

During my absence Hans Mattson, my friend and traveling companion across the Atlantic, had called on Hannah. He, together with his brother-in-law and a couple of their neighbor families from Stoby had just established a new Swedish settlement in Vasa, Goodhue county, Minnesota. He had secured a tentative promise from Hannah that we would meet him in Red Wing on a certain day when he would drive us out to Vasa. However, having that beautiful lake up there in the woods in mind, I did not take Hannah along but made the trip alone to Red Wing the following day to meet Mattson as had been arranged. I thought that it would be pleasant to meet the Swedes in Vasa after which I would return to Carver. Late in the evening I reached Red Wing by Steamboat. I hunted up a Swedish boarding house; only the wife and daughter were at home. They took me in, and after a while, the husband and two sons arrived. At once he came over and, staring boldly at me, he yelled so loud that it almost frightened me, "What kind of a being are you?"

"I am a man," I replied.

"That I can see," he shrieked.

He was known as "The Shrieker". He was not as dangerous as he sounded. We afterwards became very good friends. He talked a lot about Vasa claiming that Mattson and Willard had already taken the best land and asserted that they deceived, cheated, etc. Because I had often heard such slander about people who were more or less prominent, I did not pay attention to his harangue. I considered that those who allowed themselves to be cheated usually deserved their fate.

Mattson came and, as agreed, he drove me out to Vasa. There I met several former acquaintances and among them an old man and his family from Ballingslof. He was known as "The Rich Man" and soon became Mattson's father-in-law. There were also two other families from the same village in Sweden. All of them were friends and acquaintances from Sweden. The following day Mattson took me around to meet all the new settlers then in Vasa. I had to admit that the tract was both attractive and fertile. It was chiefly prairie land dotted with small timber tracts. It was well-watered and the plains were covered with a luxurious growth of grass. But what helped me decide to make Vasa our future home was the promising outlook for the founding of a Church. A congregation had been actually organized that summer by a young Swedish minister, namely, Eric Norelius, who had also founded a



62 congregation in Red Wing. Besides, the Baptists had already established themselves in the new settlement in Carver County where I had been. On the other hand, quite a large log building had been erected in Vasa which was used as a church in spite of the lack of proper furnishings.

A young clerk from Red Wing had taken up land in Vasa and had built a small but good house on it. That we could use during the winter. I then wrote Hannah in St. Paul to bring along our things and take the first boat to Red Wing where I would meet her. At once we bought the things we absolutely needed such as a kitchen stove, utensils, dishes, provisions, etc. I still remember how very dear everything was. For example, a barrel of flour cost \$12.00 and everything else was in proportion. A team to take us together with our things to Vasa cost \$6.00. But soon we were settled with a roof over us. Health and youth gave us hope and courage with which to look forward to what the future had in store for us.

It was more than a mile to our nearest neighbor, but because the road from Red Wing to Cannon Falls passed near our house, we were often visited by all sorts of people. Soon winter came and it was something that we had never before experienced. From the last of November to the beginning of March there was nothing but cold and snow, week after week, month after month, without a single thaw. It was surprising how well we felt in such weather. Of course, we had to constantly watch our ears and noses so that, without feeling it, they did not turn white as snow. We certainly suffered less from the winter there than in the damp climate of Illinois.

About half a mile from our house there was a splendid clump of timber containing plenty of dried out wood. This I carried home on my shoulders so that we had a big pile of wood before the snow became too deep. There was also plenty of game such as prairie chickens, quail, and other game birds. Now and then we could also easily secure venison but after a while got tired of that meat diet. I remember how tasty it was when we could get potatoes or cabbage for a change. Hannah had to be very saving of coffee and sugar because the cost was sky high.

I also found a splendid group of long and straight linden trees located on some as yet unclaimed land. Of these I cut down sixty measuring from 25 to 30 feet in length. These I hewed as well as I could for a future log house. From these I later built a splendid house for us. It is still standing and used as a home for my renter's family.

More than once it happened, while I was out in the timber working, that Indians came to our house to warm themselves. It was no wonder that Hannah was somewhat startled when, the first time, six of them came



63 carrying their guns and calmly, without saying a word, walked in and gathered around the stove. There they sat when I came home to dinner. They greeted me with "how do", that was all. I told Hannah that she should try to give them coffee. There was only enough to give each one half a cup. This they took without saying a word and drank it to the last drop. Then one of them took a long lighted pipe, drew a few puffs, handed it to the next one who did the same, and so on all around. When it came to me I also smoked some. It tasted good but Hannah told me to give back the pipe. I then handed it to the first one and it continued to go around until there was nothing left in it. Half of the material smoked was tobacco and half "Kinuke nick". "Kinuke nick" was prepared from the inner bark of a shrub growing luxuriously in that section. The Swedes generally learned how to mix "Kinuke nick" with their smoking tobacco.

These Indians belonged to the Sioux tribe. They had seven or eight tepees which they from time to time moved about in the Cannon River and Belle Creek valleys. Later on, when they had been transferred west by the government, this tribe took part in the great Sioux uprising. Many of them were shot or hanged because they had committed hideous crimes involving murder, scalping and arson. However, as long as they lived among the Swedes they were very amiable. They came often and wanted to exchange their venison for potatoes, pork and other things; it did not occur to us to be afraid of them. Gradually we learned enough of their language to be understood. Many times I went into their tepees all alone and was as well treated as anyone might wish.

In this connection I might also state that when the Indian uprising did occur and many Swedes were compelled to flee from their homes in the West, several of them came to Vasa. More than one of these credible men related how the Indians stood watch between the Swedish homes and the homes of their American neighbors in order to prevent the Swede's from warning the Americans about the danger that threatened. When anyone from the Swedish homes tried to approach the American homes, one or more Indians would suddenly arise from the grass and threaten him with their guns. As soon as he had returned to his folks, the Indians vanished. It can also be said that Indian squaws helped Swedes to load their wagons and then motioned them to hurry. When the Swedes finally got started they were followed by an Indian who now and then signaled to the hidden Indians who were guarding the trail. All the Swedes luckily escaped but everyone of their American neighbors, young and old, were killed and their houses set on fire.

63



64 The same thing happened in more than one locality. Many claimed that not a single Swede was killed except by mistake or because he had joined forces with the Americans. The fact is that the American settlers in general treated the Indians shamefully, while on the other hand, the Swedes treated them well. One may well decree that our treatment of the Indian problem has been and still is a disgrace to civilization, not to say Christianity, in the United States. It has been and still is, to a certain extent, a barbarous annihilation of the people whose land we have practically stolen.

The first winter we lived here seemed somewhat long. However, we tried to maintain lines of communication between the homes through gigantic snow-drifts. When the wind moderated a pair of oxen were tied to a sled and off we went to the nearest neighbor who also harnessed his oxen in case he had any. If not, he took his shovel along. In that manner we covered the whole settlement until all men and oxen were joined to our company. In each home visited we were treated to food and drink. So we had an enjoyable day and at the same time maintained passable roads all over Vasa.

One cold afternoon a couple of men came trudging along. The younger one was helping along the older one who had imbibed too freely. The feet of the drunken man were almost frozen solid. They entered our home and I, aided by Hannah, had all we could do throughout the night to save his feet and sober him up. But when his feet were saved and he was himself again, he became greedy and a wolf. He could not pay us anything saying that he was very poor. His young comrade, however, told me not to let him go until he had paid for the food and nursing because he was rich. I then told him sharply that if he did not pay at once for what was reasonable that I would have him arrested and brought back to Red Wing. That helped because he was just as foolish as he was stingy.

All the while I had been roaming around trying to pick out the best locality for our future home. There were large tracts of fertile plains, but they lacked timber and water. New settlers on land always required timber and water. That is the reason why first settlers on a tract always leave the best agricultural land for those who come later. Already the most convenient locations had been preempted, but several of those who had staked claims had left without satisfying the legal requirements involved. These were mostly young men who worked in Red Wing. From one of them I bought for \$25 the equity he thought he had to the piece of land that I have owned for forty years. It was the N.W. Quarter of Section 32, Township 112, Range 16, 160 acres. Bell Creek ran through the middle of



it. About half of it was ready for cultivation, the other half being timber. We moved there during the summer of 1856 as soon as we had the house built. I hired a man to break five acres on which I planted bought a pair of oxen, plow, harrow, cow, pig, etc. When this was done and the house somewhat in order our money was almost gone. Everything we needed was very dear.

65 Along the creek there was a very good stand of grass. This I cut and secured a lot of good hay which Hannah helped me stack. That fall I cut the corn, stacked it next to the hay, and built a fence all around it. We had counted on a good income from the sale of hay, but a windy day we saw in the distance a line of fire several miles long rushing in the thick grass which covered hills and valleys and which had withered from night frost and dry winds. The grass burned like a tinder in the strong wind. We were not prepared for this. Although we had some time in which to carry water to throw on the stacks and exerted all our strength to save our first crop, we were soon compelled to run for our lives to the adjoining piece of land where I had sowed winter wheat. Tongues of flame, like evil spirits, seemed to pursue us far out on the cultivated field. Suddenly as the fire had come, so suddenly did it pass. We could see how the hay and corn stacks were hopelessly lost. As soon as the fire in the grass had burned out we ran to the house in order to at least save that. However, all danger was over when we reached it. Because for a considerable distance around the house the grass had been tramped down during the summer, there was not much food for the flames and we soon put out all the fire around the house.

It was a hard blow to lose our grain and all fodder for the winter, but it was much worse for some of our neighbors who also lost their houses. Two people lost their lives a few miles from our home. They were a child and a sick woman, so badly burned that they died.

One of our neighbors had a newly sowed wheatfield which protected his hay stack so that it did not catch fire. We arranged with him to feed and use our oxen during the winter, but that was a trifling help because the oxen were so badly starved that it took half of the next summer before they could be used. We had some chickens, but because the chicken coop was probably not well constructed, early in the winter a mink from the creek crept in and got away with everyone of them.

However, we were young and in good health. Soon we retained our courage. We still had a little money and our clothes were not entirely worn out. During the summer quite a number of new settlers had arrived, some direct



66 from Sweden and some from Illinois, Wisconsin and other sections. Several of them had more or less money; they needed help, advice and other aid in the new and strange Vasa. We were constantly at their service and sorely needed all that they could afford to pay us from their slender resources. As I now had a pretty good knowledge of the English language I was often called upon for help in all kinds of business dealings with the neighboring Americans. Therefore, I was compelled to learn how to execute all kinds of legal documents; in this way I earned many a welcome dollar. Hannah was also very enterprising. She not only made clothes for us but also for those of our neighbors who could afford to follow the fashions. Thus passed the long hard winter of 1856-1857 in Minnesota.

During that summer, as I have already stated, many new folks had arrived, among them people of all sorts: clerks, sailors, merchants who had failed, students, small gentry (several of whom had run away from the Swedish law because of various kinds of offenses). Some of these became in time real good citizens, but many were of little or no value to either themselves or the community. But there were also a large number of really upright and substantial farmers with families, servants and cottagers which they had brought along from Skane, Smaland, Vasterfotland, Ostergotland, Halsingland, Jamtland and other Swedish provinces. It was, and still is, these fine characters who lent stability and integrity, and thereby gained an honorable standing in Vasa. It was chiefly because of these that Pastor E. Norelius and his young wife came to Vasa. He also secured a farm and for a time was our nearest neighbor. While he was very enthusiastic about the independent farm life in Minnesota, he soon found so much work to do in organizing the religious and congregational affairs in Vasa and vicinity, yes, and in the whole state of Minnesota, that he had to abandon agriculture to its fate. I shall not try to describe what he as a pastor has contributed toward the good reputation of the Swedes in Vasa and Minnesota, not to say in the whole northwest. Others much more capable than I have tried to evaluate his life and labors, but much remains to be recorded. I merely want to state that now again he is (1896) my neighbor in Vasa. While his harvests from the 120 acres he owns in Vasa have been small, he loves to "root" in the soil when time and opportunity offer.

During the summer the log church became altogether too crowded. At the first congregational meeting that I attended it was decided that every man should contribute a board and 50¢ toward the construction of an addition to the church door-side. But, where should I get a board? Just previously I had executed two deeds for which I had been paid one dollar. Then I heard that Jacob Robertson had a few new boards but no money. I went to see him. He was just as glad to receive 50¢ from me as I was to get one of his boards.



## CHAPTER XII

Part of the summer we lived in Red Wing where I had jobs quarrying stone, digging cellard, etc.. First, however, I had my five acres sowed in wheat and another five acres of sod broken and planted in corn, potatoes and other vegetables. At harvest time we returned home. The wheat was so gloriously luxuriant and heavy that it was a joy to contemplate. I cut it with a cradle scythe and Hannah gathered and bound it. While she was strong and energetic, she could not quite keep up with me; hence I would occasionally lay down the scythe and help her. The stacking of the wheat was also successful. Our oxen had recovered their strength from the excellent grazing so that they easily dragged the wheat on a sled to the stack. We were not able to buy a wagon; it would have cost us about \$125.00. Nearly everybody else was in the same plight.

67

Then we cut and gathered a lot of splendid hay which I had now learned how to protect from prairie fires. I plowed a few furrows around the hay stacks, and then some more quite a distance away from the first ones. The grass in the space between the two lines of furrows was then burnt some dry and calm evening before the grass in general had become so dry that there was a danger of prairie fires. All new settlers were afraid of starting fires in the autumn. However, in spite of all care, almost every autumn for many years prairie fires did more or less damage to farm animals, haystacks, etc.

By now we had a good supply of wheat, corn, hay and vegetables. A barn for the oxen, cow and chickens was built. A lot of fire-wood from across the creek was brought home.

Hence the outlook for our future was in all respects brighter. But just then began the severe money panic which continued for several years and caused suffering for many new settlers, much more than they had ever before experienced. Everybody having cultivated land had harvested a splendid crop, but nothing could be sold.

At first there was a lot of paper money - gold and silver money had totally vanished from circulation. The paper money was so-called "wild cat" money, some of which was worth five or ten, and some 25, 50 or 75 cents on the dollar. One was obliged to buy small books, which were published twice a month, which told how much the money issued by each bank was worth. But even those books could not be depended upon because a dollar bill which today was worth 75¢ might tomorrow be worth only 50¢ or even less.

With a great deal of care, I had butchered a fine pig for which I hoped to get some money, but when I and the oxen one cold day dragged the carcass to Red Wing and peddled it around the streets searching for possible buyers, I



was finally compelled to exchange it for store goods rather than drag it home.

68 We had had "boom" times. The wildest kind of speculation flourished. Towns were laid out on all possible and impossible locations. The craziest schemes were launched, not only by individuals and numberless companies, but the hysteria gripped the general public just as hard. Minnesota, which up to that time had been a territory, became a state\*and a large number of new counties and townships were organized, among them our Goodhue County and Vasa township. Necessary, as well as unnecessary officials with very liberal salaries were elected and almost all of us received one or two public offices. Big undertakings for the benefit of the state and counties were started. Several railroad plans were set on foot and state and county buildings were erected on a huge scale. In order to secure the money needed for these crazy schemes, there was issued an enormous number of state and county bonds carrying a high rate of interest, as well as numberless quantities of notes by stock companies. Now, due to the depression, most of these obligations were not worth the paper on which they were so handsomely printed. In order to pay expenses, salaries and interest on the state and county obligations, the people were taxed at an enormously high rate, but when attempts were made to collect the taxes, the money for them could not be secured on any terms. The result was the general bankruptcy of state, counties, and individuals. The disappointments were certainly painful now that the naked reality appeared, and here and there was real suffering. However, our sudden poverty, like our sudden riches during the boom, was more or less imaginary. Our real resources were our ability to work, our splendid land and the improvements we had made on it, the increase of our farm animals. All this remained and hence we were really about as well off as before. But we could not get rid of the miserable taxes. For many years they annually reminded us of how foolish we had been when we all at the same time thought that we could get rich without labor.

I had been blessed with a county office and a township office; for that work I had received a lot of county and township credit warrants as salary. At first I could not sell them at any price, but with a little assistance from the county treasurer I traded some county warrants for state warrants and paid the state tax with state warrants, the county tax with county warrants and finally the township tax with township warrants, although no one was willing to pay me ten cents on the dollar for them. Several of my neighbors who were really better off than I could not for two or three years pay any taxes for the simple reason that they could not sell any of their farm products.

Often there happened comical episodes. I remember a store clerk in

\*Minnesota became a state in 1858



Red Wing who during the boom quit his job to speculate in town lots and actually for a time lived high and was considered worth about \$50,000. He came out to our home and we fed him for a week free although he offered us in payment excellent lots in four different Minnesota towns which at one time were worth from \$100 to \$500 each. When we met on Sundays outside the log church, it was usual for us to tarry and heartily laugh at each other because of the extremely comical clothes we wore; our former holiday suits had become mere rags. Because we were all in the same boat our burdens became rather more amusing than hard to bear.

We had acquired a few sheep. Their wool was carded, spun and even, yes, dyed, by my wife. Then I was rigged out in a suit of real wool, Swedish "Vadmal", the only custom of that kind I ever owned in America. Hannah cut and sewed it herself without the aid of a sewing machine. That suit served me long and well, it was almost impossible to wear it out.

In the meanwhile, more and more, slavery had become the burning question of the day. I read the New York Tribune faithfully; in it Horace Greeley thundered so that the very foundations of the nation trembled. The Republican party was organized to fight slavery in Kansas and other Western Territories. Quite naturally, all the Swedes and Norwegians, and many Germans, were Republicans.

Mr. Lagerstrom, a good friend of mine, had taken up a quarter section of land some miles west from us and had built a claim shanty on it while he was still working in Red Wing. An American had also built a claim shanty on the same land which he wanted to take from Lagerstrom. It was a very valuable tract of land. Now they were going to go to law for it before the land office which had recently been moved with headquarters in Henderson instead of Red Wing. I was to help Lagerstrom.

We boarded a steamboat at Red Wing for St. Paul, and another one from there on the Minnesota river to Henderson. It was in the month of June. Because we were traveling against the current, the trip took two days and two nights. The boats were packed with passengers, the most of them on the same errand as we because law suits about land were common all over the state. Several of the most prominent St. Paul lawyers were along and also some people from the South who, then as now, had come to enjoy the lovely summer climate of Minnesota. Some days previously a runaway slave had been captured in northern Minnesota by slave hunters, but the settlers in that neighborhood had by force liberated him and helped him across the border into Canada. Of course, the law read that those who had helped the slave were subject to many years of imprisonment, but to enforce the law in such a community was difficult. About this there raged a long and heated discussion on the boat.



Because I, during this controversy, did not mince words in denouncing the law, I was soon surrounded by a crowd and especially by Democratic lawyers who tried to squelch me. But, when I once got started, they had a job on their hands. I stood my ground against several of them because, whatever the situation might be, none of them could in their hearts defend this barbaric law.

70

Then there appeared before me an older gray-haired man, who from all appearances was a finished gentleman. He laid one hand on my shoulder and in the other he gripped a fine cane with a gilded handle as he pressed against me. He said, "I hear that you are a stranger in this country. I also hear that you are a Christian. We grant you here all the freedom and rights that we ourselves enjoy. Tell me now if you think it is nevertheless right for you to ungratefully preach insurrection, defy our laws, and do everything that you can to bring misery into the community which has befriended you and freely admitted you as guest?"

For a moment there was a hush. Finally I replied, quite calmly, because that man's personality had impressed me as well as the others, "I have an old gray-haired father in Sweden whose features appear to me just as manly, honest and noble as yours, my dear sir. But I would rather suffer death a thousand times than that he should hear that his son had fallen so low that he approved this damnable law which is a disgrace in the eyes of the whole civilized world."

Now a German rushed in violently and yelled, "Do you want to steal niggers?"

Then I got mad and replied, "I can appreciate many and strong reasons why this gentleman, born and raised in a slave-holding community, has honest convictions which I honor even though opposed to mine. But you, you wretch, you were born in a free country. I despise you even more than a slave hunter. Don't open your mouth again in this matter because I know that every honorable son of your fatherland considers you among the scum of the earth."

He said no more and slinked away, shame-faced like a dog.

Now the lawyers got after me. I had already said enough to expose me to possible legal punishment in the form of a jail sentence. For about two hours I single-handedly had defied them all and began to get tired. Luckily, a young pleasant fellow from Massachusetts stepped forth to relieve me. He was a lawyer and an abolitionist. That gave me the opportunity to withdraw with honor.

After waiting for two days our case was tried and we won. However, as our opponent had the right of appeal to a higher U.S. Land Office, Lagerstrom settled the case at once by the payment of \$50.00. He is still living, a well-to-do farmer, on that same quarter section.



Community politics in Vasa caused several amusing episodes. The earliest settlers wanted to run things according to their own notions as long as possible but, while I had a part in the management, I was not satisfied with several of their undertakings. Hans Mattson had been chosen county auditor but the rest of the officials treated our upright settlers with little respect. When the nominations for a new community board were to be made, the old gang was in control. They prepared a ballot on which they each appeared as candidates for two offices, and no one else who did not belong to their ring was on except I, who with reluctance, was allowed to stand for the office of a Justice of the Peace in which I had previously served. Their insolence angered me in the highest degree but, because of the indifference to politics which most of the new settlers showed, and the influence of the tightly organized ring, I considered it practically impossible to upset their plan.

71 But help came from an unexpected quarter. One morning just before election day an old man from Jamtland, Sweden, now my nearest neighbor, and a man who faithfully tended his farm animals and tilled his land, but had never uttered a word about politics, came to me and said, in a quite matter-of-fact way, "Now you must spend the whole day preparing ballots. Write in whoever you desire for each office, but no one, except yourself, who is on the ballot of the ring, is to be included. I will distribute the ballots everywhere because no one suspects that I have any interest in politics. And, let me tell you, we will win."

Much surprised, I pondered a moment on it and finally replied, "All right, let's go."

That evening the man distributed 200 ballots all around to those he shrewdly believed to be on our side. So secretly was this done that on election day when nearly every man in Vasa was present, the ring thought that they had unexpectedly become very popular with our people. Everybody was friendly and cheerful until the time came to count the ballots. No one had left the place. All wanted to hear the result of the voting and pretended to know of nothing unusual. I had nothing to do with the counting of the votes but stood where I could watch it. It happened that ten or twelve in a row of the ring's ballots were taken at the start. That put the members of the ring in excellent humor. They were certain that they had every vote. Then they drew one of the ballots that I had written. H...., who was in charge of the counting then exclaimed, "What in the hell is this?"

Whereupon he read the ballot out loud and made fun of it. Then someone who could no longer contain himself said, "You will, no doubt, find several more such."

Then H.... became angry and swore that he would not count them. I stated as calmly as I could, "Queer as the ballot may seem, it must be counted."



He then continued counting until about half of the ballots were counted and everybody could see that we would win. He became almost crazy, stopped counting, declared he would be damned if he would continue, asserted that no counting would be done, that the voting was illegal, that it was fraudulent, etc.

All eyes in the room now turned to me. It was clear they thought, "How will you handle this?"

As I arose everybody quieted down. I addressed H....n sharply, "Tell us definitely whether or not you are going to continue counting."

"No, you damned traitor," he shouted.

Turning to those present I said, "H....n refuses to perform his duty as the law requires. Therefore we must elect some one else to take his place."

72 At once one of our friends arose and nominated me. I was elected with a "yes" so loud that it shook the building. H...., taking off his hat, threatened to fight me for the place in front of the ballot box. This rested on a table placed on a platform up to which two or three steps of stairs led on the two sides. It was actually the Vasa Church platform at that time. On this platform H....n now stood and the three judges of election sat around the table. Naturally, H....n was enraged to the highest degree. In his shirt sleeves he now threatened me with his fists in case I should attempt to occupy the place to which I had been elected. Again everything quieted down. Without saying a word, and with my eyes on H....n, I slowly stepped up on the first stair to the platform. Now happened what I least expected. As I took each step up on my side, H.....n took a step down on the other until, as I reached the ballot box on the platform he was standing below. Luckily, the three judges of the election were so amazed that I told them to keep their places, they did so until all the ballots were counted.

The ballots which I had prepared won with a large majority and the old gang did not dare to interfere further, although they uttered threats.

The one who was most delighted with the result was my old Jamtland neighbor J.M. It was really to his credit that the old ring was annihilated.

From that day on and for many years thereafter, no public acts in Vasa were decided upon which did not meet with my approval. While these things may or may not have been for the best, the fact remains that upon me personally rested, and still rests, the chief responsibility. I was compelled by circumstances and the confidence of those people to assume that responsibility in our community. I must admit that the people in Vasa were very patient with me when I more than once impulsively did something foolish, they believed I meant well.

While I am at it, I will tell about another election fight. I think it was in the fall after the township election just referred to that there was a state election in which the slavery question caused a great controversy.



It had happened that in the southwest corner of Vasa some Americans had settled. All of them were Democrats and in favor of slavery. A couple of them were from the South; they were proud and haughty and despised "the damned Swedes". These Democrats called to their aid several "pugugly" fighters. I found out that they had promised their leaders in Red Wing that they were going to control the Vasa election "willy nilly". I knew full well that those sharpers would not hesitate to employ any means to secure control. At that time the election laws were not as exact or strict as they have since become.

73 Now we had plenty of time in which to make defensive preparations because we knew what they had threatened to do. There were a lot of young husky Swedes in Vasa, who were not afraid to stand up man to man against anybody who might appear. Among them was a tall, slender but very strong fellow from Varmland known as "Big John". He was the most easy-going man in the world and patient as a lamb. It was an easy stunt for him to grab an ordinary man in each hand and forcibly dance around the room with them. But when he did get angry, it was safest not to get too near him. I had heard these and several other stories about him but had never seen him in action. Since we were good friends, I went to him the day previous to the election and asked him to choose as many others as he wanted to help him because I depended upon him to check the Yankees who had promised to squelch the Swedes the next morning. He did not say much, but from the look in his eyes I felt that we could cast aside all anxiety about the matter.

As I was supervisor of the election, I came early to the ballot box in order to have everything ready. Before long there arrived three wagons loaded with Democrats from the expected direction and another wagon with two barrels of beer and whiskey. All who wished to drink were invited to partake and such there were even in Vasa in those hard times. I began to get alarmed at what might happen when I saw how many of our own people had become half intoxicated.

During the forenoon, however, everything went along smoothly, but after the noon hour the Americans began to crowd around those of us who were collecting the ballots and caused all kinds of disturbances. I asked them to keep still or else leave, but they only derided me. Then I looked at Big John, and I shall never forget the terrifying grin that spread over his face. He simply reached out with his enormous arms and mashed the whole lot together with irresistable force into a corner of the room. There he kept them so closely packed together they could not move. The Swedes stamped, hurraed and laughed to their heart's content. The Americans swore and yelled, but John only grinned. Now and then he glanced toward me. When I thought the right moment had come to act, I told our folks to place themselves so that there would be an open lane to the door. I then nodded to John. He at once stepped back and



the Americans, shamefaced and angry, marched out through the lane that the Swedes had opened for them.

There was some drinking and a sort of reconciliation outside because I heard a lot of noise and laughter. However, I did not pay any attention to it until later when the Americans were about to leave. I ran to the window and saw six Americans seated in a wagon. The driver was a big, black, whiskered thug. He held the reins in his left hand and in his right an entirely new "black snake" whip. Beside the wagon there stood a few Swedes, among them "Big John" with his satisfied grin, thanking them for the drinks. Then the big American stood up in the wagon and aimed a terrific blow with his black snake at John's face as a farewell. But, slow and awkward as John appeared, he instantly raised his arm and grabbed the whip, winding it once around his hand. Then I saw one of the most comical contests that I have ever witnessed. Calmly John stood there. With one hand he held the whip while the American, with both hands on the handle, tried with all his might to pull it toward him. The American was wild with fury and froth was on his whiskers, while John, grinning, stood stock still without saying a word.

74 Finally two of the other Americans came to help the driver. Placing their feet against the side of the wagon all pulled and tugged until the wagon threatened to tip over. Stock still and grinning, John kept his hold on the other end of the whip. At last the whip broke in two and each of the contestants had a part. Then the driver shrieked, "For this I will see your heart's blood." Then the Swedes became enraged and the Americans were glad to leave with their horses galloping. Never again did they try to control the voting in Vasa.



## CHAPTER XII I

75 It was not only in politics that we had controversies. Also for our social and religious interests we had to fight many a hard battle. Of course, to start with, our Vasa people were mostly Lutherans, but the Methodists and Baptists expended great efforts trying to get the upper hand. Also, a good deal later on, the Waldenstrom sect did likewise. They naturally said that they alone were living Christians, the Lutherans being dead. When our log Church soon became altogether too crowded, the Lutheran congregation began to build a large new frame Church, the first real church building in Vasa; this is now being used as a congregational school house. Then the congregation gave the old log Church to the township for communal purposes with the reservation that they could continue to use it for religious services until the new church was ready.

Pastor Norelius, who, in addition to Vasa, had to serve congregations over practically all of Minnesota and part of Wisconsin, was therefore often compelled to leave us to ourselves on Sundays. Then it was customary for a deacon of the congregation to read to the people from a good collection of printed sermons. As the log church was now also a community house, others had the right to hold meetings in it. It happened, therefore, on a Sunday when I was to read the sermon to the Lutherans, that the house was packed full of people when I arrived with the book of sermons under my arm. A Methodist minister and a Baptist minister were there trying to decide which one of them should open the service.

"No, my dear sirs, I am the one to commence." I said. "We still have the prior rights here."

"How paltry," they remarked, "to read out of an old book of sermons when there are two such fine messengers of God present."

"Old Nohrborgh, who has written these sermons, is still just as able as two itinerant Vasa preachers," I replied.

Then I encountered a very embarrassing situation. As usual, the service was to open with a song. I knew of no one except the sexton who could lead the singing in the Church, but he was in sympathy with the Methodists and refused to start the singing when I announced the opening Psalm. Then I went over and whispered in his ear, "If you don't start the singing when I so request, I will see to it that your salary is not paid."

That clinched the matter. He sang and I read. Hence the service was conducted to "the queen's taste". Both preachers had to listen and wait until I was through. By the time our new Church was finished the Methodists had also built a Church on a hill east of ours but considerably smaller. Then



I heard an old Swedish Methodist woman say, "Our little David will soon strike down your big Goliath." However, that has not as yet happened and now appears more improbable than ever before, because our congregation has steadily grown larger while the Methodists have been continually decreasing in number. The Church which the Baptists built is now being used as a community dairy. The Waldenstrom sect have only a lot, they have never had a Church building in Vasa and likely never will.

Just north of our farm we had an Irish neighbor. They were Catholics. We came in contact with them a great deal. Hannah and the Irishman's wife were particularly good friends. During the hard times the latter often complained because of their difficulties. Then Hannah would say to her that she could not understand how it was possible for them to find consolation and to endure life when they had no Bible in the house.

76

"I couldn't live without the consolation and strength that I daily receive from the Bible," Hannah said.

The result was that the women actually induced their priest to sell them a Bible, but throughout it there were a lot of explanations such that, to us, they seemed to obscure rather than enlighten the reader. After this, because the family was sternly warned to to associate with us, they visited us only by stealth.

Then, as now, bad blood was caused by the fact that where many Swedes settled down, they gradually crowded out the Americans, Irish, and other kinds of folks except the German Protestants. The latter were the most persistent. In many localities I have known them to crowd out the Swedes. If anything, they are more industrious and saving than the Swedes. Their women in general also work harder and longer both in and out-of-doors than other women. Consequently where Swedes and Germans meet, a severe competition arises. Very often the result is that, where the Swedes are the most numerous, the Germans become Swedes, and vice-versa, partly because the weaker nationality adopts the language of the stronger, join their congregations and enter into their social life. However, such a fusion of nationalities is rare; usually there arises a Darwinian evolution strife which hitherto has usually ended in favor of the Swedes.

Between Vasa and Red Wing there were a couple of congregations on excellent land which at first had been entirely taken up by rich Americans and some Rich Englishmen. They had splendid houses and barns and everything in such good shape that the small farmsteads of the Swedes seemed insignificant in comparison. Nevertheless, one here and another there on the borders of their tract began to sell out to Swedes. That so greatly vexed the proud Americans that a large meeting was held at which it was decided that none of them should sell their farms to Swedes. However, if someone nevertheless wanted to sell out



and move, the rest obligated themselves to either singly or jointly to pay them top prices and thus shut out the Swedes.

I was then County Commissioner as was also one of the proudest of the rich Americans in Featherston Township which was located in the central part of that area. When now many controversies arose in the commission about how the public funds were to be spent for roads, bridges, etc., this man always tried to defeat the plans that I proposed with sneering remarks about the "poor Swedes", with their small fields and their poor little shacks. That angered me. Such disparaging talk I usually paid back in kind on the spot. Hence, I at once said, "You go on! Build fine houses, cultivate big fields and improve your farms all you can as long as your money holds out. We stand ready and are prepared to take it all over when the time is ripe. We know about the measures that you have in mind against us. They are just as sensible as if you decided to dam up the Mississippi river at Barn Bluff. Accompany me some day throughout our settlement and, if you wish, I will accompany you throughout yours. Then we shall see that everyone of our small house contains a little group of healthy, strong children who have already commenced to work. But when we visit your big houses, in scarcely more than half or one-third of them will we find more than one poor, sickly child who will never be of any practical use in the world. Tell me, to whom will the land eventually belong if not to us and our children?"

Now I am old and gray. So also is the man in question. Both of us have observed how the Swedes have and still are, quietly taking over one after another of those beautiful farmsteads in Featherstone and vicinity. One day recently when I met him he said, "That time you prophesied truly. Your people have actually taken possession of our lands and houses. But don't you see that because we are continually adopting your children, we will get it all back again? Look at your own son, married to an American girl, a professor in an American University, and a genuine American. The same thing happens to the best of your youth. They are, or will soon become, not Swedes but Americans."

To this I did not have much of an answer, because, whether for weal or woe, it is a fact that our Swedish children become Americanized faster and easier than those of any other ancestry with the possible exception of Norwegians who closely resemble us.

However, this tendency to crowd out other nationalities has here had the following results. I can travel from North to South over ten miles and from East to West over fifteen miles without seeing any but Swedish homes, Churches stores, factories and postoffices. The language, customs and usages are all Swedish. About the same situation is found in many localities in the Northwest although these, to start with, were settled by many nationalities. The first



settler gradually sold out to the Swedes. How long these sections will retain their Swedish stamp is hard to say, but, while this situation remains, they constitute a highly interesting phenomena in this country.

A certain Mr. Theam, a man about 40 years of age with a pretty good education, rambled about for several years among us Swedes in Minnesota. Sometimes he preached and wrote articles for the press and he was always welcome. When preaching he quoted many Bible passages, always giving the book, chapter and verse. Once when he was staying with us, I told him, "You preached pretty well this afternoon, but half of what you said was telling the books, the number of the chapters and the number of the verses. That habit you should avoid, it sounds too pedantic."

That he did not like and defended the practice. Then I said, "It is incomprehensible that you should be able to always remember the book, the number of the chapter and the number of the verse. Sometimes you surely deceive us."

78 Then he asserted that, without making a mistake, he could tell me the book, the number of the chapter and the number of any verse that I might read from the Bible. I took our Bible and for about half an hour I turned the pages at random and rapidly read out verses. He answered just as promptly and always correctly. Finally I thought he had made a mistake because when I read a certain verse he gave the wrong book, number of chapter and number of verse. But calmly he said, "Look up what I gave you." Sure enough, not only the same verse but the whole chapter, appeared in another book.

It was winter time and next morning, when he left to visit some of our neighbors, it was snowing hard. That afternoon a regular Minnesota blizzard with extreme cold and much snow raged. No one ventured out of doors. During the evening I heard that Theam, just before the storm broke, had left for another place about four or five miles away. We became anxious about poor Theam's safety, but the air was so thick with whirling snow that nothing fifty yards away could be seen. It was biting cold, and in the darkness no one dared to leave his house.

The next morning was clear and not so cold. All the neighbors then started out on skis to search for poor Theam who surely must have gone astray and frozen to death. About noon we came to a school house which was located by itself on a hill. Here we found Theam as lively as you please playing with the children. During the blizzard he had lost his way and did not know where he was when suddenly, in the darkness, he bumped against the side of the school house. Going inside, he found plenty of dry stove wood for a fire and made himself comfortable.

This good-natured and learned man continued his travels in this way for many years, but finally he disappeared. I do not know when or where he died.



#### CHAPTER XIV

As Justice of the Peace in this section for over 30 years I have been in a position to learn about practically everything that has happened here which in any way might have been considered lawbreaking. Hence, I can testify to the respect that Swedes have for law and order. To their honor I can assert that a more order-loving and law-abiding community than Vasa does not exist in this country. That now and then there have been exceptions to this among the thousands of Swedes from all the provinces of Sweden is only natural. All of these emigrants were not of the best sort; some of them had fled from the homeland to escape from the clutches of the law. Several kinds of lawbreaking occurred. I shall refer to a few cases.

19 A former soldier, living on the outskirts of our community had, although he was married and had several children, become altogether too good a friend to his neighbor's wife and had threatened to thrash her husband. When others warned him about this behavior he threatened them also and, because he was a noted fighter, it was not easy to punish him. One fine day a number of men, led by Big John, gave the soldier 25 lashes. Because Big John handled the whip, the effect of the whipping was seen and felt for a long time. Knowing that this was an unlawful procedure, they had done it secretly so that I knew nothing about it until after it had happened. The soldier had about 20 of his attackers arrested and they were fined \$25.00. Of course the Justice of the Peace meant to fine them \$25 each, but because he was no lawyer, only a farmer like myself, his sentence was so ambiguously worded that it was taken to mean a fine of \$25 for them altogether. Hans Mattson was their lawyer. He quite cleverly announced that he was satisfied with the verdict, paid the \$25.00 and dared the Justice to get more if he could.

Shortly thereafter the wife of the party referred to above appeared before me to make an official complaint against the soldier because of brutal treatment in her home. I sent a constable to arrest him. However, because I knew that the constable would not be able to bring in the soldier without assistance if the latter was not willing, I sent him word that he must not resist. He obeyed.

"You are my prisoner," I told him. "But I will allow you to send for a good lawyer to defend you before me, as Justice of the Peace. In the meanwhile you may live with me if you will promise not to try to escape." That he did. When the husband of the mistreated woman heard about this, he also sent for a skillful lawyer. The accusing party, fearing that I, as Judge, might be too lenient with the defendant, asked for a jury of six men. Now there were long and eloquent speeches from both of them. In addition to the opposing parties there was only one witness called, namely the accusing woman who now was to testify against her lover and in favor of her husband who had been thrashed.



The statement against the soldier was so bitter that he was fined \$35 and costs. We therefore elected to stay in jail rather than pay although he owned not a little property. After he had been in jail three weeks, I wrote the sheriff to set him free on my responsibility because he was sorely needed at home for the spring work. He was happy and grateful and he loyally kept his promise to me to behave in the future. He lived for many years after that and was considered one of the most well-to-do farmers in Vasa.

Sometimes the craziest and most unbelievable things happened. A short distance west of our home there was a whole colony of oldtime independent religionists. They had imbibed their religious ideas from Reverend Swedberg, a peacher from Finland. Under no conditions would they acknowledge us as Lutherans although they were even more opposed to other denominations. They never read or approved of any writings except Luther's. Their leader was a former village schoolmaster with a very meagre education, but he had some ability as a speaker. He baptized their children and administered communion to them whenever and wherever they met. On the whole they were good folks and, according to their ideas, very religious. Nearly all of them were well-to-do farmers. Their minister, the former schoolmaster, had a young wife and two children. He had purchased a fine piece of land.

It so happened that a young man among our acquaintances had courted and been accepted by the daughter of one of these oldtime religionists. But as time went on, the young girl declined to marry as she had promised. One day the young man came and asked me to accompany him a few miles to the place where these people were to hold a big meeting. He asserted that the preacher intended to discard his wife and marry the girl in question, and that the matter was to be decided at the coming meeting. That sounded unbelievable to me. However, I could not get out of going with him.

We arrived at the meeting just as the pastor was ready to begin the harangue which was to prepare the way for that which was coming. Everything became quiet when we entered and took seats among the others. I told the peacher that we did not wish and had no right to disturb their service and asked him to begin. We would remain peaceful listeners.

"No," then said N(the preacher), "There will be no service here today."

Then I turned to those present and asked them if they were not going to hold a service. "No, now we don't want to," they decided.

N's wife and children were present as well as the girl and a lot of people I knew. They looked glum and angry.

"Well, as you don't want to hold a service today I will proceed to execute my errand. No one is permitted to leave this room without my permission," I said. Turning to N. I said, "In the name of the law and in the presence of these people, I command you to truthfully answer the questions I shall ask.



I warn you that I shall write down the questions and your answers in case they will be needed as testimony against you, if that becomes necessary." Taking pencil and paper, I continued, "Is it true that you intend to separate from your wife and marry another woman?"

"Yes,"

"Why?"

"Because Luther says that marriage without love is adultery. I do not want to live in adultery."

"Don't you love your wife?"

"No."

"Do you love this girl?"

"Yes."

"Have you had sexual intercourse with her?"

He turned and twisted about for a while but finally replied, "Yes, but before God she is my wife because I love her and she loves me. Because of my brethren here who were not sure that what we had done was right in this matter we are gathered here to prayerfully consider what Luther teaches about such a situation in order to avoid a split that might occur among us as brethren."

"I now ask you: Don't you know that you are breaking the law and that you can be severely punished for it?"

"One must obey God rather than men."

I then turned to the older men who were the pillars of their congregation and asked, "Is it then really possible that sensible people, as I have considered you, can have any doubt about whether or not N. has done what is right?"

"Yes, we had doubt about it because Luther's words are not clear. Hence this meeting in the hope that we might be convinced in our minds."

"Is what N. said about you true?"

"It is not true. However, I thought, as he asserted, that it was God's command that I should become his wife."

I then asked N's wife that she thought about the matter.

She declared that the girl was more guilty than N.

I placed the papers I had written on the table and, speaking sharply to N. I said, "You must accompany me as a prisoner." Turning to the others, I said, "Men, be careful to not interpret Luther in such a way that you land in jail."

Now I witnessed a startling proof of marital loyalty. N's wife jumped forward, took the papers that I had laid on the table, tore them into a thousand pieces, and declared that now I could not arrest her husband.

I said, "You are altogether too kind to him. But I shall see to it that you are finally allowed to keep the wretch. In the meanwhile, I will take charge of the cuckoo."



I now took N. home with me. He did not offer the least resistance. However, I was not a little puzzled about what to do because I could not bear to have the Americans learn about this wretched business and with glee deride the honorable reputation that we Swedes had already earned in the county. Neither could I, after what had happened, let him go unpunished. I led him into a room, locked the door and said, "Now, my dear fellow, it is of no use for you to act as if you were a child of God. You are a big scoundrel and I should be glad, without mercy, to send you to jail for many years just as you deserve. But that would be too hard on your good wife and your innocent children. I will therefore allow you fifteen days in which to sell your land and be away at least 100 miles from here. If, after fifteen days, you have not left this county, you will be jailed. Now get out and see that we do not again meet."

Joyfully he hurried away and before the fifteen days had elapsed had sold his farm to good advantage and with his family moved to the far west. A couple of the men who had been at the meeting told me some time afterwards that they had received letters from him in which he confessed that he was wrong in the matter, asked them to forgive him and to tell me about it, to thank me for being ~~so lenient with him~~, and to let me know that he and his wife were living together happily.

The young man who intended to marry the girl was completely cured of his infatuation for her because of what was disclosed at the meeting. Later on she married a widower and nothing has since been heard to her discredit.

Several times I have single-handedly disposed of quarrels at once with words of authority, as seemed best to me, without a resort to the written law. The results have nearly always justified my actions with good endings.

Strife between the various sects caused much unhappiness when a man and his wife belonged to different denominations. More than once have I been called upon to restore peace in such homes. Strange to say, they turned to me rather than to their preachers in such cases. I will relate one such happening.

A couple had come here with a considerable fortune which, it was said, had been acquired by unlawful means. They had several children. The wife became converted and joined a well-known sect, but the husband remained a Lutheran. One day when I was working alone in my wood lot, the woman came to me and declared with tears and lamentations was impossible for her to continue to live with her husband. I must help her, no matter what it might cost, just so that she was separated from him. However, I suspected that her anxiety and dissatisfaction was caused by the fact that their illgotten riches were rapidly vanishing. After she had cried and complained for a long while I spoke to her in a serious tone as follows, "You may be as unhappy as you please, but to do what you now propose will only make matters much worse.



I am the only one who knows about your quarrels. I know from what you have said that you have no lawful grounds for divorce. Go on home and continue to fulfill your duties as a wife and mother. If, later on, you can in good conscience declare before God and men that you must leave your husband, come again to me and I will do what I can for you."

She never came back and so the whole matter remained a secret between us.

It is unbelievable to what extent pride and the self-righteousness of the sects could transform some of our simple and ignorant Swedes who otherwise were good and honorable folks. To get along with them became almost impossible. It is too bad to wound a person because of his religious convictions, but it is also hard to be forced to do it because of the love of what is right and true.

83 Avarice also made unhappy homes here and there. One able and industrious couple with several older children strove with all might and main to get rich. As they were healthy and diligent they succeeded very well. But during the money panic, they did not get ahead fast enough for them. The wife was particularly dissatisfied. Night and day she labored like a slave, as did also her husband and children, but her bad disposition and constant nagging made them all very unhappy.

Late one evening the man came to our house very much upset. He asked me to in some way help him sell his farm. He wanted to move to town. He had a good trade which would support him. He could not stand it any longer on the farm because in spite of his tireless labor everything seemed to go wrong.

"All right," I said. "Now we will first have supper and then you will stay with us tonight. Tomorrow morning, when I have thought over the situation, we may perhaps find a solution." Next morning I said to him, "You want to sell your land with all improvements for \$500. Very well, I will buy it and, in two or at the most three years, I can easily sell it for at least \$1500. You have more full-grown cattle than anyone else in Vasa. At present you can sell them for \$10 each but in two years they will be worth from \$30 to \$50.00 each. The same holds true about many other things that you own. In short, you are one of our most well-to-do farmers, but you don't realize it."

The breakfast and my talk made him satisfied and cheerful and he left for his home. Two years later my predictions had more than come true and that family were certainly one of the richest in Vasa.

But then the man got sick and died. Shortly thereafter the widow married an old bachelor. That turned out very badly. Although the son was a good fellow, even if a trifle stupid, the woman soon became so angry at him that one day she simply packed his knapsack, threw it out of the door and drove the poor chap out of the house. He went, but not far from the house he took his knife and cut his own throat. He continued to walk on, with



the blood streaming until he fell dead with the knife in his hand.

84

When this was happening I was in Red Wing serving on a court jury. A young man came riding on a galloping horse after me. It so happened that the coroner, whose legal duty it was to investigate suicide cases was not at hand, hence it became my duty. I sent a message back ordering that six men whom I named, should meet me at that place at one o'clock in the afternoon. When I arrived there were at least 100 people standing around the dead man, but no one had touched the corpse. At once, I held court with the jury of six, examined two witnesses as well as the widow and children, but learned nothing except what I have already related. The corpse was buried in a wooded hill. The family found it unpleasant to remain in the community because many people blamed the widow's wickedness as the cause of the tragedy. She soon sold out and moved further west.

In addition to the above I have legally investigated three other suicide cases. As far as I could make out the reason they took their own lives was that they had run away from their families because of various crimes. For some time they had been very despondent and, when they could no longer endure it, they hanged themselves.

Partly because of my own experiences, and partly because I have observed it in others, it appears that those who have lived in Sweden until they were over 25 years of age cannot become accustomed to the new conditions of living here and are dissatisfied with everything. They grumble and complain and long to return to Sweden. I suffered this homesickness for a whole year. I remember how I reasoned with myself and easily convinced my understanding how foolish this grumbling was, and how many and big opportunities were here open to me, chances that people like me never had in the fatherland. But it was of slight help. Finally this hampering feeling totally vanished as far as I was concerned, but many older men, as well as women, suffered from it for many years and in many cases it resulted in insanity, or suicide. This homesickness, no doubt, is the reason that the percent of insane people among the Sandinavians here is greater than in their home lands.

Parents and relations all too often sent their ne'er-do-wells here in order to get rid of them. That fact cost the lives and sanity of many. To be recklessly thrown among those who were here fighting a battle for existence was merely jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Now and then some bravely struggled through successfully, but the majority of such emigrants soon go under, usually in drunkenness.



In the fall of 1857, a daughter arrived to make our home still happier. We named her Clara. The nearest midwife lived three miles from our home. When I arrived there to fetch her I found that she had a little one of her own which she had to bring along. I carried her baby because the only conveyance was by oxen. We walked briskly over the prairie and arrived home in plenty of time.

A couple of years after that, little Agnes came to brighten our home. She was the third daughter the stork brought. While they were healthy, pretty and able girls who were a great joy to us, nevertheless I had a sort of feeling that it was getting a little monotonous.

Finally a son arrived in 1863. Of course, that caused a great jubilation in our circle. That time the midwife was a near neighbor. Her family were from Harjedalen. She insisted that the boy baby should grasp hold of several tools before he was baptized in order that, as she said, he should become "handy". Then claiming that he should also be able to read, write and figure, I let him take hold of a pen and a book. So, he was then well prepared for his future career!

85

We named the boy William and, sure enough, he early showed signs of having a mechanical turn of mind. I remember that when I had brought home the first reaper he sat and studied it so intently and with so much interest that he, who never otherwise neglected his meals, forgot all about eating. When I came to bring him in and saw how the machine fascinated him, I let him sit there and ordered that no one should disturb him until he was satisfied with his inspection. It took a long time before hunger drove him from the reaper, but then he knew all about it and understood even better than I how it worked.

In 1861, the country had reached the conclusion that the problem of slavery could only be solved by a civil war. It was no longer possible to settle it by negotiations or compromises. President Lincoln asked for volunteers. Hans Mattson resigned from his office and organized a company of volunteers consisting of Swedes and Norwegians. He came to me asking for my help and offered me a lieutenant's commission issued by the Governor of Minnesota. That was the only time I can remember that I wept tears. Because, when I asked my wife if I could enlist she answered that she would never give her consent. We were poor, she had her two small daughters, one of them only an infant. When she said, "If, in all conscience, you leave me, you will have to do it on your own responsibility." Then I experienced the severest conflict of my life. An old love of mine for a military career as well as my ambition for high honors had at last to be set aside when I contemplated my twenty-four-year-old wife



with her two little ones, so poor and no one but myself to depend upon, she whom I had so solemnly promised to cherish and protect.

However, I did what I could to make it possible for the young men of Vasa to enlist and we were successful. Mattson got a splendid company from Vasa, and the adjoining Norwegian settlement, namely, Company D, Third Minnesota Regiment. However, they encountered bad luck when with two other regiments they were defeated and captured by the Rebels at Murfreesboro (Dec. 31, 1862-Jan. 2, 1863). It was generally asserted that this disaster was entirely due to the general's incompetence and not the fault of the rank and file. It so happened that at that particular time, Hans Mattson, who was one of the most influential captains in the regiment, was home on leave. Several of our Vasa soldiers always claimed that if he had been with them they would surely have fought their way through.

86

This disaster was generally considered a disgrace for the whole regiment, and therefore also for Co. D, from which they had to suffer on many public occasions, although blameless.

Before the war was over everybody without dependents had to enlist as volunteers or be drafter. No one in Vasa who was drafted was compelled to enlist, but it cost us considerable money to pay \$50.00 to \$100.00 for substitutes to take their places and so furnish the number of soldiers required of us. Many of the young men who went to war from Vasa came back with health impaired, many died in army hospitals down south, but some came back in good health to enjoy the honor of victory in the desperate struggle in which they had taken part.

Especially in the beginning, opinions about the war differed. The Democrats sympathized with the rebels and we Republicans called them Copperheads. One evening when I was eating in a restaurant in Red Wing an old Democrat, M - L had there collected a number of young Irishmen whom he was treating and urging them not to volunteer. The war was nothing but politics; it was only inferior people, tramps and crooks who joined the army. That made me so angry that I called the old fellow a Copperhead. As the Irishmen, then as now, were Democrats and hated all Republicans, they took his part and for a while it appeared as if I would not be able to get out of the quarrel with a whole skin. Fortunately, some one had sneaked out and found a policeman who came in just in the nick of time. The young fellows now hastily disappeared while I gave M - L a lecture that he did not soon forget.

However, soon the resentment in the North against all Copperheads became so violent that they crept into their holes. Now the Sioux Indians who had been driven west, broke loose and murdered a great many new settlers living in their vicinity. Terrible as their depredations were, rumors enlarged their crimes ten-fold. Even in Vasa the people were very apprehensive.



One day that fall it happened that all the older persons in the locality called Jamtland, consisting of three big adjoining farmsteads situated in a valley, were away from home. Their children who were playing in the neighborhood thought they saw Indians. They rushed home in terror. Not finding their folks at home, they ran to the nearest neighbor with the news that the Indians had attacked Jamtland. The person who was sent to investigate found that all the houses in Jamtland were empty. Hence the rumor spread that every body living there had been murdered or carried away.

Messengers were sent out in every direction. I had just come home and was sitting eating my supper when old Abraham Nelson arrived breathless and declared that we must escape at once. The Indians had killed everybody in Jamtland and there was no time to lose. I doubted this very much. However, it was not impossible for a small band of Indians to sneak as far east as this. I therefore sent word to all our neighbors to meet in the biggest and strongest log house in our part of the colony supplied with guns and ammunition. Mother carried our smallest child and I the other one.

When we arrived at the log house, it was already filled with women, children and men with their hunting guns. I tried to calm them saying that the rumors were so unbelievable, yes, even impossible, that we must at once send some men to Jamtland to learn the whole truth about it. It was dark now and we could not very well spend the night in that house. Therefore, I asked for two volunteers to accompany me to Jamtland to find out what the situation was.

We set out in the darkness. Everything was silent as a grave and we became more and more convinced that there was no danger. Suddenly we heard a horse walking and rustling in the tall grass. Instantly we threw ourselves down ready to shoot. I was a little ahead of my companions. I shall never forget the awful feeling that filled me when I raised my gun to shoot a fellow being who I could just make out in the darkness and who was approaching where I was. Then I heard, with the greatest relief, a familiar voice holler, "Get up, Dolly." It was O.H. from Jamtland. When the grown folks got home late that evening and had found no children they set out in different directions to search for them. They knew nothing about any Indians.

However, in other Vasa localities this unfounded rumor about Indians caused even worse results. A lot of wagons, cattle, women and children, guarded by the men with guns were well on their way to Red Wing before they found out that it was a false alarm. Everybody became a little shame-faced, especially on the following Sunday when Rev. Norelius took occasion to give us all a lecture about it.

The Sioux uprising, though, was soon put down and many of the worst



offenders were hanged. I saw one of the corpses in Red Wing. Dr. Hanly had it. While at that time it was against the law to dissect bodies of hanged persons, when there is no complainant, there is no rage. Dr. Hanly secretly showed me the corpse and said that everyone of those who were hanged had been sent to young doctors here and there for dissection. He trusted me not to tell anybody.

88

The Civil War was over and victory won, but at the cost of an enormous debt. Strange to say, it seemed that the debt only caused much strife and movement in all business affairs. Everything cost more than ever before, nevertheless all classes and especially laborers and farmers became generally prosperous. While both silver and gold had entirely vanished from circulation that we did not worry about because there was a flood of paper money. To pay old debts with them became like a dance. Every bit of land in Vasa was put in cultivation and yielded glorious harvests of prime wheat of which a couple of wagon loads could be sold for \$100.00. Hence, we in general, soon became small capitalists. That a reaction was coming was suspected by some, but never mind, we thought, let us enjoy ourselves while the sun keeps shining.

One result was that the price of land in Vasa rose to heights never before or since reached. Several allowed the fever of speculation to deceive them into buying neighboring farms by giving mortgages on their own and the acquired land. As the prices soon fell, they lost all of it because they could not meet the interest and the promised payments.

As time went on the general prosperity in Vasa increased, however slowly. Most of the land had been brought into cultivation and yielded bountiful harvests of wheat and oats every year. Wheat, in particular, became a dependable source of income. The yield was usually from fifteen to twenty-five or thirty bushels per acre of No. 1 wheat. That continued for fifteen to eighteen years until the soil was exhausted by the wasteful farming methods employed. The same condition prevailed all over this section. Red Wing was the only market for wheat for farmers living within thirty miles. It was said that at that time no other market in the world handled as much wheat bought direct from farmers as Red Wing.

It is a fact that from the fall threshing time until spring when the roads were passable all the streets of the town were packed so full of wagons loaded with wheat from morning to night that one could hardly move about. As no railroad had then reached Red Wing all that grain had to be conveyed by steamboats having in tow several barges, generally to LaCrosse and then by railway through Milwaukee to Chicago. Many Red Wing merchants became rich by buying and shipping wheat during those years.

It was only natural that a lot of complaints from the farmers should be



heard because of the manner in which they were treated by these grain dealers. As a result about 100 Vasa farmers organized a company and bought a small warehouse in Red Wing. I allowed myself to be persuaded to take charge of it. I rented out my land, sold my farm stock, machinery, etc., and moved to Red Wing, where I received and sold wheat grown in Vasa. For a couple of years the enterprise was very successful. I easily earned my salary of \$800.00 and something additional for the company.

89

While the old and rich warehouses, run by firms, were hostile-minded against our company, I still think that they would have left us alone if our example had not been so infectious. When the farmers in various parts of the county observed how well we were getting along, movements arose in three different localities to similarly secure warehouses of their own. That created a great furor. All the old concerns now combined and induced the transportation companies to increase the freight rate to Milwaukee eight cents per bushel. This eight cents was returned as a rebate to those who belonged to the Red Wing Chamber of Commerce. I was now notified that we would not get the eight cent rebate unless I joined their organization. Moreover, the old firms began to buy up warehouse receipts that I had issued to farmers for wheat that they wanted to hold for possible higher prices. Because our warehouse was small I was obliged to ship 1200 bushels of this wheat belonging to the farmers. In the course of time I was notified by the Milwaukee firm I dealt with that I had to sell the 1200 bushels within ten days or pay heavy storage charges each week that they held it. That was certainly inspired by the old Red Wing firms in order to squelch the threatened farmer movement.

I was now obliged to sell this wheat which belonged to several farmers and while I tried hard to keep it secret, it became known the day after I sold it. Then the old firms offered the farmers from five to ten cents per bushel more for my warehouse receipts than the price quoted in Milwaukee. I did succeed in redeeming some of them myself. However, the result was that I lost all that I had gained for my company and in addition several hundred dollars of my own money.

Now I fully realized that with our small capital it was impossible to continue to fight the old rich firms, especially as my own customers did not hesitate to aid my enemies as soon as they could gain a little by so doing. I had told the owners of the 1200 bushels what I could sell it for and they said it was satisfactory to them. But as soon as others offered them ten cents more per bushel then they declared that I had to pay the same, otherwise they would sell where they could get the most. My attorney declared that I was not legally responsible and guaranteed that I need not pay for anything except the wheat that I had actually received, but I did not want to go to law with my former good friends and neighbors. I resigned my position, closed

27



up the company and realized enough so that everybody was paid back what they had invested. No one but I lost anything. For me it was costly indeed.

I was then offered similar work by one of the old firms at an increased salary. They realized that I had secured many good customers who would probably follow me to the new firm. But I was tired of it all and, besides, some declared that I had sold out to the firm which had offered me more money. In other words, that I had not done all that I could for our company. However, before long people in general admitted that I had been honest with my employers. At any rate the people, as a sort of compensation for my loss and the unfounded gossip about me, elected me with a whopping majority to represent the county in the State Legislature. Of course, the financial returns from this office were little or nothing, but the large vote of confidence that was given me by these who knew me best was a great satisfaction to me. Being of an optimistic temperament I soon forgot the injustice I had suffered from both friends and enemies during my dark hour of adversity.

90

When the session of the legislature was over we moved back to Vasa. But in Red Wing we had lost more than time and money. Two of our last children died in Red Wing: A son Granville to whom I became much attached because of his bright and glad nature, and Hannah who was more like her mother than any of our other children and gave promise of becoming a very handsome girl.



For some time before, and while we were living in Red Wing, a certain Palson lived in Vasa. Because of his charming personality and many good qualities he had gained the confidence of the people in general. He took the lead in organizing a company which established a general store in Vasa. He was postmaster and speculated widely in land. In the course of time his operations became very extensive. Because nearly everybody who belonged to the warehouse company that I conducted in Red Wing also belong to Palson's company, I was obliged to also buy a share in it. However, I never had anything to do with the directing of its affairs. At the end of about two years it went bankrupt and every shareholder had to pay \$100 each. So that was a lost of \$100 for me in addition to what I had lost in the warehouse venture. Besides, Palson had contracted to buy my share of the crop from my land that I had rented out. That amounted to \$175.00 of which I received only \$30. The result of all this was, after I had bought the horses, cattle and farm implements needed to farm the land myself, that I had to mortgage my farm for \$800.00. It took many long years before this was paid in full because the interest on it was high. Willie contributed very materially to the payment of this debt. He was healthy, strong and in the course of time, became a better farmer than his father. Palson left Vasa with much heavier debts than he could possibly hope to pay although he himself believe that he could do it and tried to do what was right. He moved south and died shortly thereafter.

Perhaps I should tell about some of my experiences in the legislature. It being my first term there I was, of course, too "green" to make my influence felt among those hardboiled politicians. Hence, I confined my ambition, without any regard to political party plans, to simply vote on every measure as I thought right. That caused some bitterness against me from my own party but, at the same time, raised me in the estimation of the more highminded. Therefore, when I was elected to serve a second term in the legislature I was well-known and better posted. I then knew how to arrange matters so that I was appointed a member of two of the most important committees and was often consulted when important questions arose.

As to the general impression that it was necessary to use bribes in order to put through certain legislation, I shall simply relate my own experiences. Twice I was offered bribes of large amounts. It was known that some of the younger members gladly followed my advice.

On one of these occasions it was a well-known and very good friend of mine who approached me, a man who I then believe and still think of as honest and upright in his dealings as anyone else. Speaking frankly, he said,



"This is a matter which will benefit the state in general, something which you cannot deny, and at the same time greatly profit me in my present situation. That I know you understand. Hence I propose to share my profit with you, half and half. Besides, no one will criticize you for working and voting for it because a little more than half of our county are supporting the measure."

I replied, "I shall be just as frank with you as you have been with me. I am anxious to help you, but I cannot. I stated publicly to my conscience that I did not approve the measure and they expect that I will act accordingly. Do not ask me to meet those honest friends of mine with a lie on my tongue. No not at any price."

92

As it turned out, the measure was defeated. However, we remained good friends as long as he lived. On the other occasion a fellow whom I did not know, and I never did find out who he was, approached me. He asked me if my name was Pearson. "Yes," I replied.

"Do you know," he said, "that in the 'X' bank in Red Wing, you have a credit of (he named a considerable sum) which you can draw whenever you like. We believe that you are favorably disposed to the railroad legislation that is proposed and that you will do what you can in its favor."

"You are mistaken, my dear fellow, I have already voted against it once and will continue to do so," I answered.

"Well," he said, "the credit will be increased by (he named a larger sum)."

"Stop," I said, "You can go to hell with your credit."

"You are a fool," he said as he turned to leave me.

After that nobody tempted me with a bribe. The railroad measure passed in spite of anything that I could do.

I began to feel that I was not suited for a professional politician. It involved questionable connections of various kinds and did not permit me to speak right out about what I thought and felt. Soon I became known as a man who my party could not absolutely depend upon in every situation that might arise. And with this reputation I became gradually well-satisfied.

It so happened during both of my terms in the legislature that a U.S. Senator was to be chosen. In both instances William Windom was elected. I was glad to vote for that honorable and upright man. Later on he became a member of the Cabinet of President James A. Garfield as Secretary of the Treasury. After I had voted for him the second time, he offered to appoint me as director of the U.S. Land Office in Duluth. But, once for all I had decided to never again leave my farm, and therefore refused his kind offer. At that time the Land Office in Duluth did not do much business, hence it is not likely that it would have been profitable to me.

Now I concentrated all my efforts on farming. In connection with this I raised horses quite successfully. I had bought two fine mares from which I



bred twenty-two colts in thirteen years. We usually had two every year, and, because the horses I raised had a good reputation, there were many eager buyers. We also raised cattle and pigs which were quite profitable some years. So the time gradually approached when we were to be again out of debt.

93 In the meantime Willie had grown up and began to worry about his future. One year we had a good crop of wheat which we threshed early. Wheat was quoted at ninety-five cents a bushel. I sent Willie to Red Wing with a load and asked him to find out how much he could get for one thousand bushels with the understanding that I would then drive in and close the deal. Instead he that day sold twelve hundred bushels at \$1.05 and contracted to deliver it within two weeks. When he came home and told what he had done I was much surprised and somewhat annoyed. Now everything else about the farm had to be set aside while we hauled two or three big loads of wheat to Red Wing every day for two weeks. In the meanwhile the price of wheat had dropped to ninety cents. Now the firm which had bought the wheat squirmed and protested that the wheat did not grade No. 1 as agreed. In order to avoid a law suit I agreed to accept a little less than they had promised Willie.

Now all our debts were paid. It was such a relief to us all that during the rejoicing I told Willie that he could enter Gustavus Adolphus College if he so desired.

Yes indeed, that was what he wanted, but that ruined a good farmer. While he continued to help me on the farm during vacations it was soon evident that he had lost his taste for farming. When he had completed the course in the college and was planning to leave for Lindsborg, Kansas, I offered the farm as it was if he would stay and operate it. But he replied, "No, sell the land if you are tired of farming. You can live on your income from the proceeds. I do not want anything. I simply desire the opportunity to make my own way the best I can."

Although I did not much like his decision, both Mother and I realized that it was not worthwhile for us to try to hinder him from following his own inclinations. It is with the greatest satisfaction that I now can add that so far he has in a splendid and honorable manner proven that he really could make his own way.

After we moved to the farm our family was blessed with three daughter, namely Hannah, Ester and Ebba, all of them healthy and bright. However, Ebba died of diptheria while still a small girl. Clara married Henry Miller in Vasa and Agnes married John Ekblad from Lindsborg, Kansas.

When I look back over the past I can only marvel over the joy and satisfaction that our children brought us. Without doubt next to God I have my good and talented wife to thank for this joy which many of my neighbors sadly lack.

75



By this time we had sent out into the world one son and two daughters, but we still had enough children at home to prevent us from becoming lonesome. Folks still refer to Granville's handsome daughters who were prominent in the community for many other reasons besides beauty. However, mother and I began to feel the burden of the heavy work on the farm. When I was nearing sixty years of age we decided to rent out the farm and bought a house with a few acres of land near the Vasa Church. We sent first Hannah and then Ester to Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, where they completed the Normal Course with honors. Hannah married Oscar Anderson from Lindsborg. Ester is still at home where she does everything in her power to make pleasant and comfortable the days that remain to me in this mysterious world of ours.

94

After moving from Red Wing to our farm I tried to regain the controlling influence in Vasa politics that I had exerted before I moved to Red Wing. In this I was only partially successful because during the years that I had lived in Red Wing several younger men of ability tried very hard to displace us of the older generation. This was particularly true with respect to a certain J.D.P. who was striving for leadership with considerable success. He was a comparatively young man of some ability who had been a volunteer in the war and from which he had returned with honor. At first, he fought bravely by my side in several political battles, but before long we "got in each others hair". For several years, because of our constant fighting we kept our Vasa folks more or less in hot water. Sometimes I came out on top and sometimes he won. However, he enjoyed the advantage of youth and growth while I was getting old and less energetic. He was elected a member of the legislature 3 times.

Now, he, like myself, is getting too old and younger men are doing to him what he formerly did to me. However, in spite of our old fights, we are now sincerely good friends.

The worst of the results of our old battles was perhaps the fact that sometimes the whole membership of our Vasa congregation became involved. In their eagerness, the partisans of each side rushed at each other more intensely than the leaders of both parties had intended. Because of this much bitterness was sometimes engendered which we had considerable difficulty in wiping out.



## CHAPTER XVII

November, 1898. I have long neglected to write, but now I must again try because Ester will not otherwise leave me in peace.

Since my last writing Ester and I have made two enjoyable trips. The first one was a visit a year ago last summer to my son Willie and his family in New Haven, Conn. On our way there we stopped in Milwaukee for a stay with my son-in-law, Henry Miller, daughter Clara, and their four splendid sons who already show much promise for the future. We enjoyed our visit there very much.

From there we took a steam boat to Chicago where we tarried only long enough to see the great and beautiful parks. Then we took a train directly to New Haven because we had to be there in good time for the Commencement Exercises at Yale University where Willie had taught for several years, and at which time he was to be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. I was to have the joy and honor of being present to see my son receive this important scholastic distinction.

At the station Willis and his excellent wife met us and conveyed us to their home in a fine carriage just as if we were really "big bugs". Here we met their three sweet daughters whom I had never seen before. It did not take long for me to become friendly with those little birles.

95 I had not seen Willie or his wife for several years and I was delighted to observe the happiness in their home and their evident prosperity. But a melancholy thought crept into my mind, namely: if only mother had been with us!

So now I had the opportunity to see the famous and imposing University. Certain it is that I had never seen anything that could be compared with it either in America or Sweden. With its, for America, great age, its great reputation, its large and magnificent buildings, its world renowned teachers, its 3000 to 4000 students from the most prominent families in every state, Yale had become the center for the education of America's youth.

Several different kinds of exhibitions and sports were on the program, some of old origin although now somewhat strange to me, and some so new and unique that they could only have been originated in the brains of happy students. Exciting games of baseball and football are played there before many thousands of spectators who had come from every section of the country. I would never have believed that these games could create so much enthusiasm. Even gray-haired men and women were infected by it.

Now I saw thousands upon thousands so excited that they jumped up and down, cheered and yelled like lunatics. To tell you the truth, I too finally acted almost as crazily as the rest of the fanatics.

The chief contests are between Yale and Harvard. Yale had won for several years in succession, but this time she lost.

Finally the day arrived when, with imposing ceremonies, diplomas were to be awarded to the fortunate ones who had qualified for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Yale had a unique organization. It is governed by a Board whose members are chosen from the older Alumni. All the seats in the Yale auditorium were reserved at the graduating exercises for the faculty, alumni, and the families and friends of those receiving diplomas. The parents of the candidates were, as a rule, assigned to seats in the gallery. This gallery was so located that not everybody seated there could see or hear the proceedings very well. As my hearing is not very good, Willie told the President of the University that I had come all the way from Minnesota to see and hear and asked for a seat for me on the main floor near the speaker's platform. He answered that the only seat available there was among the alumni Ph.D.'s and hence the only way to arrange the matter was to make me temporarily a Ph.D. for that day. So, for one day, I was a Doctor of Philosophy. There were hundreds



of us arranged two by two in a long procession marching to music to the Chapel through a great crowd of spectators. We older men led and were followed by the professors and the candidates for degrees. My partner was a little grayhaired man from California who said he had a son among the candidates. So also have I," I said, "but I am from Minnesota." That was our introduction to each other. Then he asked me what year I had graduated.

"1849," I replied. This was heard by some who sat in front and back of us and one of them asked if I was a member of the Yale Class of 1849. "No," I replied. "I received my degree, although not as Doctor of Philosophy, in an institution which is 300 years older than Yale, namely, the University of Lund in Sweden."

They laughed and shook hands with me, and insisted that now I too was a Yale Doctor of Philosophy.

When the old Presidnet, in the presence of the faculty, delivered the diplomas to the candidates marching up on the platform, the students in the audience usually made demonstrations indicating their regard, or lack of regard, for each one. When Willie, with the only woman candidate, came up they cheered, and stamped and yelled "Wag". (It was their custome to give their teachers more or less flattering nicknames. Willie they called "Wag" because that word was composed of the initials of his name, William Anthony Granville). So, although I did not continue as a Doctor of Philosophy, my son became one with a high scholastic rating.

96

At last the commencement exercises were over. Not only did the thousands of students leave the big city of New Haven, but as many of its citizens as could do so moved to summer homes on the seashore. So Willie also, his family and we, too, moved to his attractive summer cottage painted red which was situated at the extreme end of the long row of similar summer houses. From the veranda one could see boats and ships on Long Island Sound. Here I enjoyed myself immensely. I bathed in the salt water and made several boat trips outside the breakwater which had been constructed by the government to protect the harbout of New Haven.

As I wanted to visit New York, Willie took us on a trip there. During two days we rambled around and saw its most interesting sights.

The seashore resort near where we lived was Savin Rock, located a few miles from New Haven. Here was a large number of amusement places and every day thousands of people came on trains and street cars from the city and country. Especially during the evening a mass of people came to enjoy a good time. I must admit that they conducted themselves decently in every respect. Never did I see any drunkenness or fighting. But pickpockets were always there so that almost everyday there was someone who found that he had been victimized.

Most of all did I enjoy sitting on the outjutting rocks to watch the sea. Sometimes, when there was a stong wind at high tide it was a magnificent spectacle. Then the flood tide rose to a great height. Usually the difference between high and low tide was about six feet. A flood tide cast on the shore a mass of sea drift among which would be found a lot of articles of various kinds such as timbers, bits of wood, bottles, yes, nearly everything that could float, even living or dead animals, fish, crabs, etc. Sometimes articles of value were found. Because much of the flotsam was seaweed and other forms of vegetable matter, farmers used to come and haul it home to spread in their fields and plough it under as fertilizer.

It is almost unbelievable how small and barren the most of the farms in the East appear to a farmer from the great Western prairies. The soil is very poor and the small fields in the valleys and on the sides of the hills seem pitiful in the eyes of one who is familiar with the extensive fertile fields in the West. After having traveled through several of the Eastern states, I one evening, got into conversation with a farmer on a trip



from New York to Buffalo. I remarked that so far I had not seen a field of grain large enough on which to easily turn a self-binder.

"How large is your farm," he asked

"One hundred sixty acres," I replied.

"How much do you make from it each year?"

"From \$1000 to \$2000." Just then our train stopped at a small station, and he said,

"The train stops here ten minutes. Come with me and I'll show you my farm. It is ten acres and this year I have already sold products from it to the amount of \$2,500."

Sure enough. There was a handsome small house and several little out-houses. Ten acres was divided into plots for many kinds of vegetable, fruit trees and berry bushes. Every day he sent one or two loads of what then was being raised to New York and sold it at a good price for cash. This provided him with an income from April to November.

97 In general, farming there is either fruit raising, livestock or dairying. Big and small towns are found everywhere containing all kinds of factories and big industries and crowded with workers of small means. The East has a lot of money. A fortune which in the West is considered ample for a family is here but a step above poverty. Here a man worth \$100,000 is not considered at all rich. Nevertheless there seem to be many laborers in comfortable circumstances who work in the many factories scattered all over the country. The East has the capitol and manufactures everything that we buy in the West. We furnish them with bread, meat, etc., but it appears that they make a big profit from it all. However, it still seems to me that if I were again a young man I would choose to make my way in the West rather than here.

We met many Swedish factory workers in comfortable circumstances. They had a good reputation as dependable, sober men owning their own homes and with money in the bank. Swedish servants were in great demand, especially in the best American homes. Certain it is that these Swedish workers can here accumulate money faster than would be possible in the West.

And so passed the couple of very enjoyable months that we spent in the East and we headed for Minnesota. Our return trip we followed the famous Hudson River from New York to Albany and thence to Buffalo where we arrived a couple of days before the big meeting there of the G.A.R. Now I was in the very same city that I had passed through in 1851 as an immigrant. I remembered very well how Buffalo then appeared. I wandered around the harbor for half a day trying to find something that was familiar. But no, scarcely anything about the harbor or in the city looked the same as in 1851. Everything was changed. Never mind, I too had changed. Somewhat disheartened I returned to our lodgings.

We spent an entire day visiting Niagara Falls as thoroughly as the time permitted. We went to the Cave of the Winds and viewed the whirlpools from both banks of the river. I had read and heard so much about the falls, that great wonder of nature, that it seemed an old acquaintance of mine although I had never before seen it. However, the more I contemplated it all the more magnificent and overpowering became the impression that it made in my mind.

It so happened that the day before our visit there a fishing boat with two men in it had been drawn into the powerful rapids in the river above the falls and before thousands of spectators it disappeared over the Horseshoe Falls. Not a trace was ever found. In spite of the many prominent warning signs on the banks of the river above the falls it nevertheless occasionally happened that fishermen were tempted to go below the danger line where all human help failed to save them. Perhaps it was this fatal accident or the majesty of the falls, which so impressed the mass of spectators that not a light word or joking remark was heard. Everybody was in a serious frame of



mind. Indescribably beautiful was the sight of the Horseshow Falls when the sun shown through the great masses of mist rising high above the falls. Several rainbows could be seen in the mist.

From Buffalo we headed for Chicago and on to Milwaukee where we again stopped with our folks and enjoyed ourselves.

Last summer Ester and I journeyed West to visit my children and grandchildren in Lindsborg, Kansas. Again we found a hearty welcome. During the two months that we stayed there my children did everything possible to make our visit both pleasant and comfortable. Especially did I enjoy playing with my grandchildren, two boys and two girls in the home of Agnes and John Ekblad, and Hannah's year-old girl. She could both walk and talk and we soon became the best of friends.

We were taken nearly all over the large and fertile plain surrounding Lindsborg. There we found a great many Swedish settlers who appeared to be getting along well in spite of the droughts and sandstorms which occasionally caused much damage to the crops. But now, just as during my visit there four years ago, everything appeared so fair and promising that I had never seen anything more lovely. We also saw a couple of colonies of prairie dogs, something I had never seen before. They are somewhat larger than our ground squirrels in Minnesota. They are found on dry, barren hillocks where they together with owls and rattlesnakes live in underground burrows and chambers. While small they are so numerous that, if allowed a free hand, they destroy large stretches of pasturage in the neighborhood of their colonies. They feed on roots and any green vegetation. The farmers drown them by pouring water in their burrows. It was amusing to see them skip around and toss their bushy tails in the air.

We had timed our trip to Lindsborg so as to have the opportunity to hear the Messiah Oratorio presented in Bethany College every Easter week. This has become so famous that even the big auditorium, seating several thousand, was not large enough to accommodate all who wished to attend. Hence, after the Oratorio was repeated on another day of the same week with every seat occupied, even I, with my meager knowledge of music, was so carried away with it all that I became oblivious of myself and everything about me. The music from the choir of over three hundred voices, the orchestra of over one hundred instruments, and the great pipe organ, melted together to produce an overpowering impression.

We also attended the Commencement festivities at Bethany college.

January 1902

Again I have for a long time neglected to write. I have almost forgotten what happened in 1899. On the Fourth of July of that year Vasa was honored by a visit from Governor John Lind. That was a very pleasant festival. After the close of his splendid address a big dinner was served outdoors during which I and other Vasa citizens expressed our great satisfaction in having the first Swedish Governor of Minnesota as our guest.

For some time I had been bothered by a sore on my lower lip. Hence, I went to the Mayo Hospital in Rochester where they cut out the sore root. After I had stayed in the hospital one week Ester arrived and I was allowed to return home with her on promising that I would return three months later for an examination. When I went back the doctors declared me fully cured and gave me permission to visit Europe, something that I had decided to do, accompanied by my son, his wife and a couple of their women friends.

Now Ester and I began to prepare for the trip. She was to accompany me to New Haven and remain there with Willie's children and take charge of them and their home during our European trip. In June, 1900, as we said our farewells it was with mixed feelings that I stood on the steps of Vasa Church and surveyed the beautiful landscape on which my home had so long been located



and where my helpmeet rested, she who for so many years faithfully and lovingly shared with me the joys and sorrows of life. Perhaps I would never again see this wonderful picture of nature. Many warned me that, if not a crazy notion, it was certainly reckless for a seventy-three-year-old man to undertake such a long journey. However, the die had been cast. Whether wise or foolish I intended, with God's help, to again visit the section of the North where I had spent the years of my childhood and early youth.

We traveled direct to Milwaukee where we stayed in my oldest daughter's happy home. She is Mrs. Henry (Clara) Miller. There I played around with their fine energetic sons. Then farewell. We passed through Chicago on to Albany. Now, as always, Chicago did not make a good impression on me, but as we only saw the sections adjoining the railway my statement does not apply to the city as a whole. To me it seemed unkempt and odoriferous. Compared with Chicago, we thought Albany a fine and attractive city. Here, among other things, is the Capitol Building of the State of New York, a massive and beautiful building. From Albany the railway followed the historic Hudson River renowned for its great natural beauty. We passed through New York to New Haven where we stayed one week during which we again attended the commencement festivities at Yale University.

99

Ester and I had ample time to look over the old city of New Haven, old from the American point of view, historically important, and especially noted for Yale University which is still the largest and most famous educational institution in the new world. Thanks to the generosity of several millionaires, Yale owns many large and beautiful buildings which sort of constitute a city within a city. Several large manufacturing establishments of various kinds are located there, and the city has several lovely and well-kept parks. Especially do I remember East Rock Park. Stone steps led to its top, a considerable height from which we could see the entire city and its harbor. On the east side there was a similar high park which was left pretty much as nature designed it.

However, the time for our departure soon arrived. Willie, his wife and I said goodbye, traveled to New York and took possession of the cabins that had been reserved for us on the Holland American Line's steamboat, the Maasdam, lying at their pier in Hoboken. This steamboat was neither the largest or the fastest in existence, but it was the only available because Willie's time was so fully occupied with his duties at Yale that we had to take what accommodations we could get in order to suit his convenience. We lost nothing by this because the Massdam was a sturdy and steady boat and in several respects more pleasant for the passengers than would have been the case on a faster boat.

I was probably more comfortable and free from anxiety than any other passenger on the Maasdam because I had handed my son between four and five hundred dollars so that he could make all the financial arrangements for me on the trip both going out and coming back. I had no worries whatsoever but lived like a rich and prominent man. I occupied a very comfortable cabin, sat next to the captain in the dining room and was free to occupy any location on the deck when and where I pleased. Besides, my daughter-in-law and the other ladies in our party always saw to it that the old man was entertained. Hence, I enjoyed the voyage very much.

The Maasdam left her dock in Hoboken a perfect June day. I shall never forget the magnificent view as we steamed out of New York Harbor. There stood the great Goddess of Liberty on her little island, her uplifted arm seemingly blessing us and wishing us a lucky journey. Long Island and Coney Island appeared magnificent with the mighty New York as a background. The forts on both sides of the channel appeared so strong that it seemed impossible for an enemy to pass them. A great number of vessels, both large and small, were passing in and out.

However, we were soon out on the Mighty Atlantic, where boats did not appear so numerous. But we saw boats here and there until it became dark.



I went to bed in the most thankful frame of mind because, now at last, after fifty years in America, I was fortunate enough to be on my way to the never-to-be-forgotten Sweden.

The following morning was beautiful and bright. Now nothing was seen except the clear blue sky and the almost as clear and blue waves on which we were rocking. Then far away on the horizon there appeared glittering sails like the wings of an Albatross. Oh, but that was a glorious sight! Look, there is another one! Hence, there are still many vessels which are propelled by the winds of heaven to their destinations. But what is that appearing over there where sea and sky meet? It is a column of black smoke from a freight steamer. How gloomy and prosaic does it not appear? It seems to me that it should not crowd in among us with all its smoke and dirt. If is a real "tramp" among respectable folks. However, it no doubt earns a lot of money and that is nowadays the most important thing in this world. There is a fishing fleet cruising hither and thither like a criss-cross. To me they rightly belong to the surroundings and add to the beauty of the seascape. Look over there where a school of porpoises are tumbling and dancing around the boat. Sometimes only a fin or tail is seen, sometimes the head and back. And occasionally they jump out of the water like playing pigs. The many changing colors and forms which all these sights took on was a never ending delight to us.

And then there were various amusing incidents among the 150 passengers so that the time did not seem long. Everybody did his best to make things pleasant. The ten days on board were so agreeable to us "land lubbers" that we could not wish for anything better. Naturally the fact that the weather was fine and the sea calm contributed largely to make everything pleasant and agreeable. Very few suffered from seasickness.

While we were still at sea the Fourth of July arrived and was, naturally, celebrated by us Americans. In honor of the day and America's glory the boat was decorated with American flags and after a special dinner we marched back and forth on the deck with our ladies singing patriotic songs and cheering loudly. In the evening there was a fine display of fireworks. There were races between fat women, lean women, girls, boys, and finally men over seventy years of age. This last race I was almost sure to win, having always been light on my feet. But there was a Frenchman who was so close on my heels that it turned out to be a tie. He, though, was only 72 while I was 73, so I was declared the winner. The prize was a big box of candy which I presented to the ladies because I do not indulge in sweets.

The ladies on board had been calling me Father Granville. So when I called for the ladies of our party I was at once surrounded by a large and lively flock of women who wanted a share in the spoils, and I trust it did them good. As a sort of reward, I then had to sit or stand while a number of the ladies took Kodak pictures of me. No doubt, some of them, both Swedes and Americans, therefore have the old man's photo among their collections of pictures from their trip. Already some of them both from Europe and America have sent me finished copies of my likeness. I also remember evenings when they used to surround me and exclaim, "Father, tell us a story!"

Of course, I had to comply with their request. So the ten days soon passed very pleasantly for me. Finally we began to see many sails as we approached the English Channel and presently we saw the white cliffs along the English shore. There was a swarm of vessels headed, so it seemed, in every possible direction. It was apparent that the ocean traffic on this side of the Atlantic was also very lively. We crossed the English Channel to Boulogne, France. That harbor city appeared beautiful to us who for so long had seen nothing but the sea and what was associated with it.











HECKMAN  
BINDERY INC.



OCT 84



N. MANCHESTER,  
INDIANA 46962

